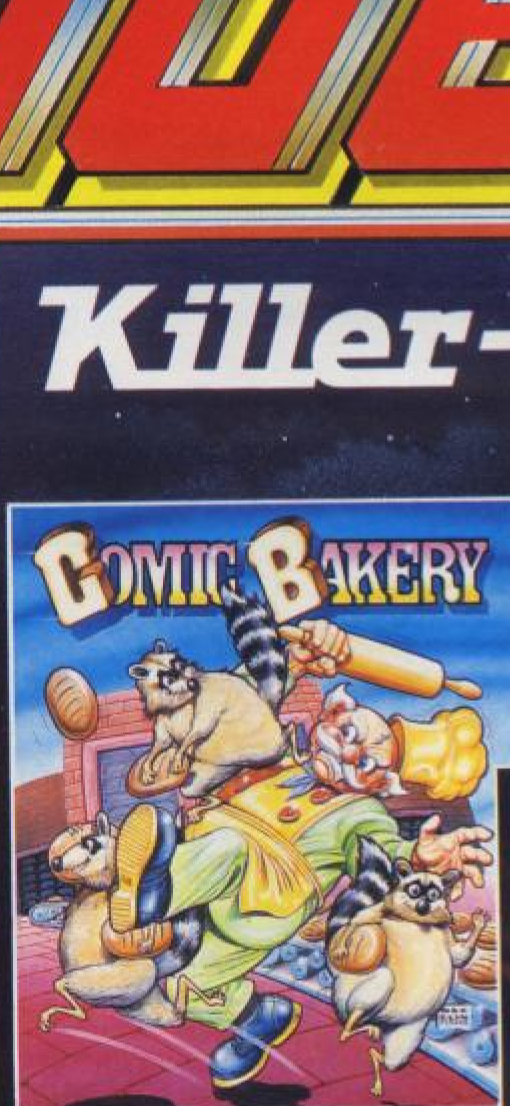
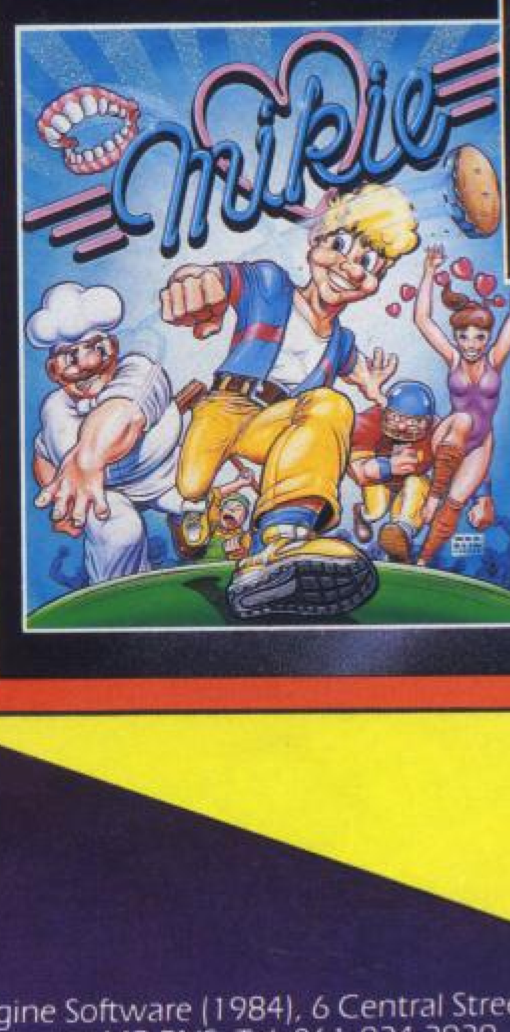

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.12 April 1986
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ZZAP! 64
MONTHLY REVIEW FOR COMMODORE SOFTWARE
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Five Top Programmers battle to see who's the best player in the country!
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See inside for details of this super competition
ART GALLERY
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'IS THAT J.R?'
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ZZAP! 64

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Cover by Oliver Frey

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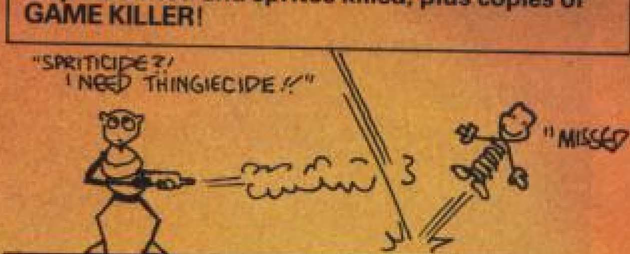
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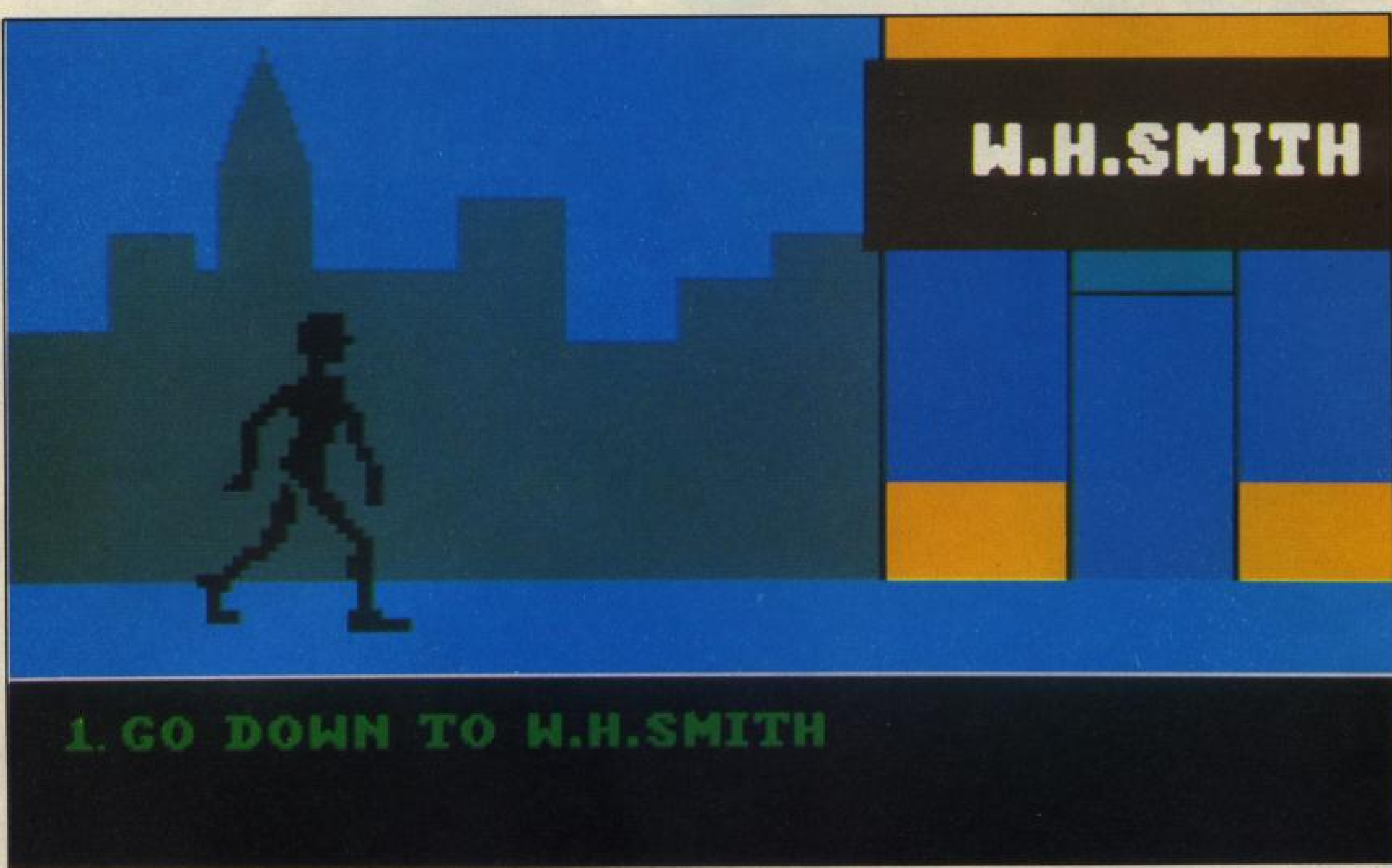
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£100 of watch/computer with 2K of data storage — and it could be yours if you win this competition!

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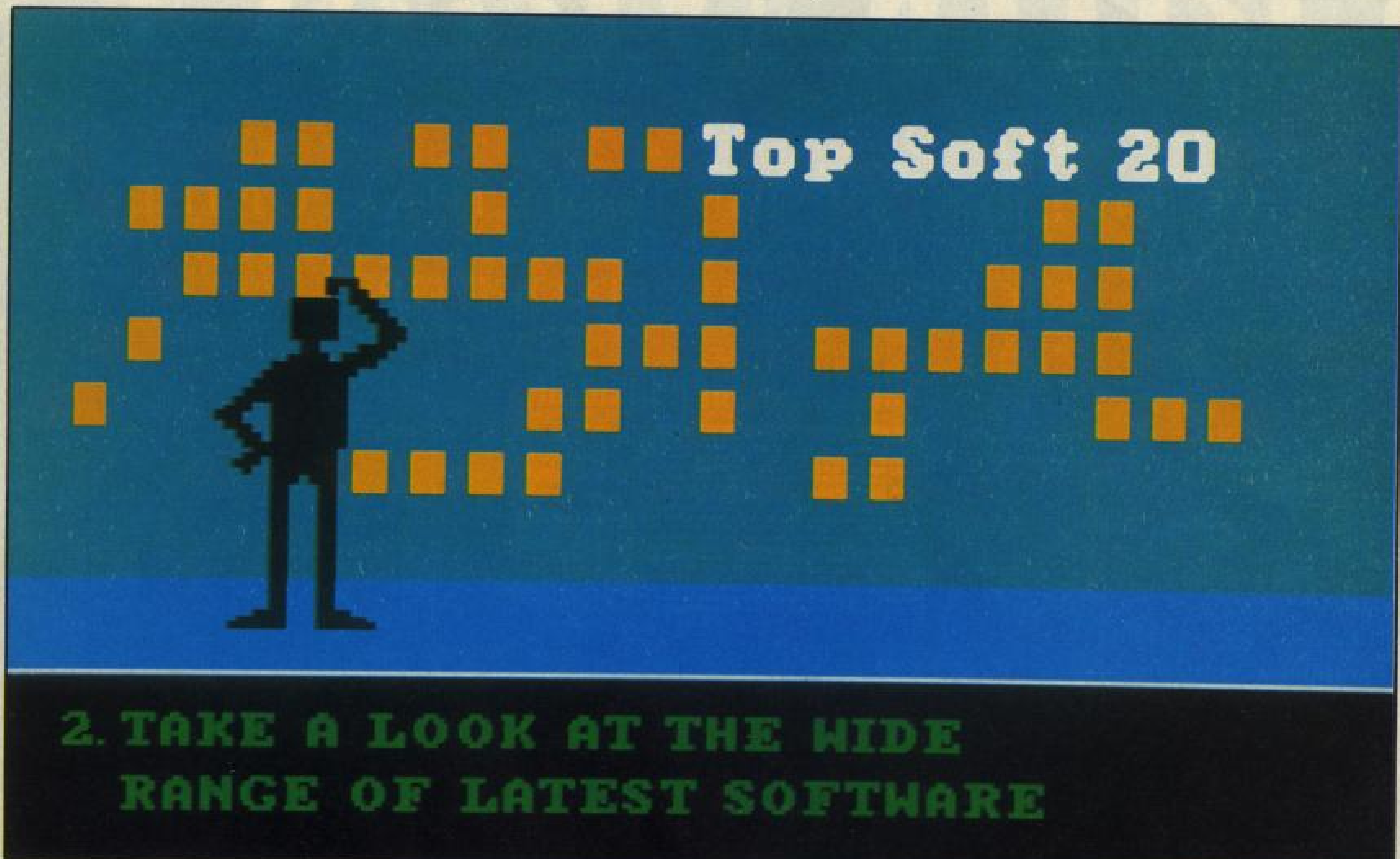


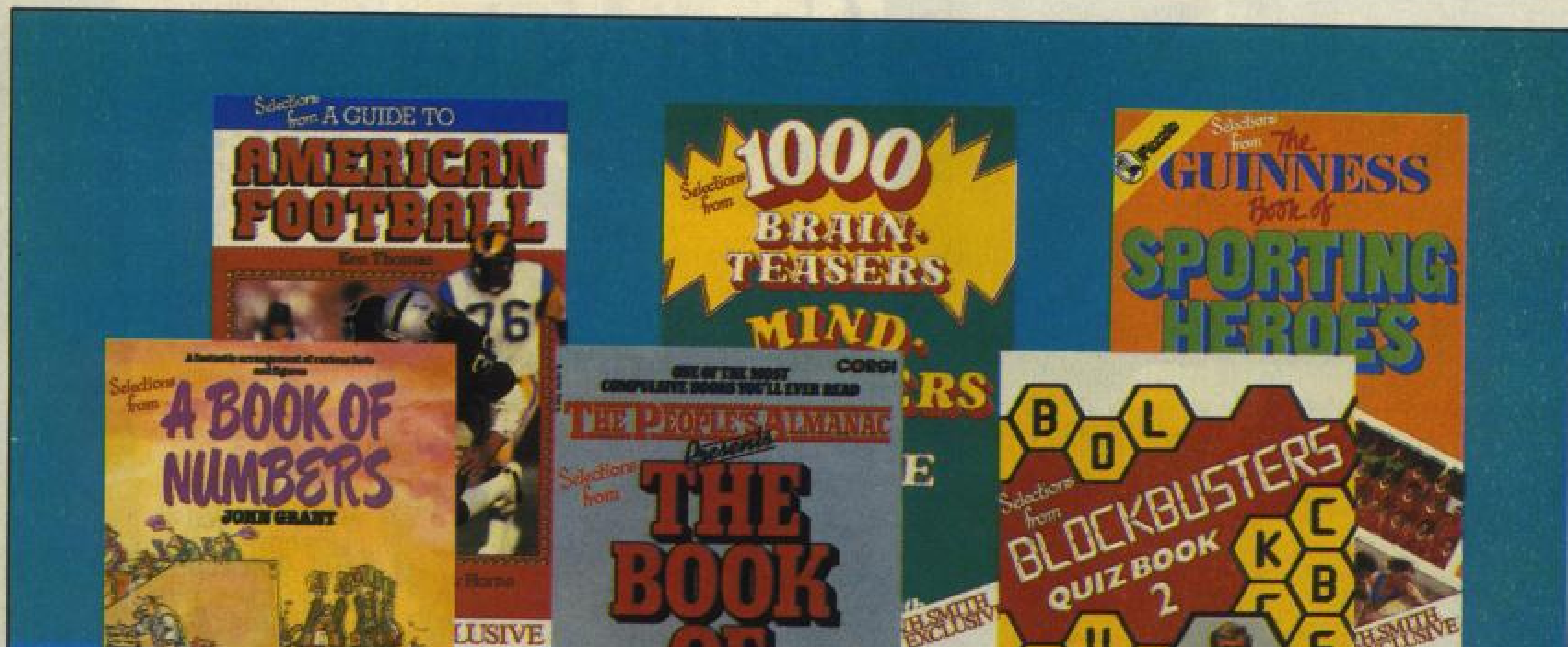
The next issue of ZZAP! 64 (the mag most in demand by counter-revolutionary anarchists (see RRAP)) goes on sale from 20th April. Miss it at your peril game freaks!

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ZZAP! ED

ARCADE MONOPOLY

After approximately five years, the games software industry seems to have come of age. Whether this is seen as a Good Thing or a Bad Thing is a matter of opinion, and judging by ZZAP! Rrap letters, the opinions differ very widely. At the outset, games were usually written by lone programmers in back rooms, amateurishly promoted and the companies which emerged were under capitalised and often poorly run by people with little business sense and even less time to devote to things like 'sales' and 'purchase' ledgers, aged debtors lists and bank statements.

What we got, though, was tremendous enthusiasm, some very good ideas (albeit sometimes let down by lack of technical knowledge or ability) and a veritable flood of games to play. Smaller 'software houses' came and went with untiring regularity, fiercely independent, often hopeless.

It didn't take too long, however, for the fledgeling industry to start moving towards conglomeration, apeing the much older recording businesses, where several labels belong to very few major companies. In recent months we have seen several well known and established software houses merge their interests with more powerful companies. The reasons are many fold and often hidden from public view, although insufficient funding for further expansion, under capitalisation resulting in inability to meet incurred debts, or the desire to remove the headaches of designing and paying for suitable promotional campaigns are probably the most obvious. Companies like US Gold have a high promotional profile, it's easier for them to handle that side of things for a multitude of other, smaller software houses, freeing the games designers to get on with what they're best at — making games. US Gold have become the largest of collectors, having either a part (or substantial financial interest), or marketing/distribution agreements with several, including English Software, Oasis, Ultimate, Adventure International and Gremlin Graphics, as well as their American producers. An associated company, Ocean, took over the Imagine label and markets products on the 64 for Vortex. Activision have just merged with adventurers Infocom, are marketing System 3's product, and Electric Dreams (though very much under Rod Cousens' management) is effectively a subsidiary. Another apparently ever open set of arms is British Telecom, either as itself (or more strictly it New Information Services branch) or under the guise of Firebird, which comes under NIS anyway. Beyond was the first to be captured, and despite conversion deals for Ultimate's Spectrum games, Firebird failed to secure the full marketing agreement with Ultimate that US Gold eventually acquired. Ex-Firebird executive, Tony Rainbird, has his own label, Rainbird, another BT investment, and only days ago Odin/Thor announced marketing deals with BT, probably through Firebird.

Responsibility for this merger fever should probably be placed at the feet of Argus Press (Software), who grabbed Quicksilva in the first of the big take-overs. Soon after they were involved with Bug-Byte, eventually buying the company from the Receiver. Not so long ago, APS acquired a major interest in the wargamers Lothlorien.

On the credit side, all this conglomeration of smaller businesses into bigger units makes for a safer financial base, allowing programmers to develop more complex ideas and be provided with the time and equipment to realise them. On the debit side, it allows a more rigid pricing structure to be enforced, independent of a game's quality. In the recent acquisition of arcade games, especially by Imagine, we have seen both great and awful games. This appears to have nothing to do with the quality of programming, which has been both innovative and exceptionally clever, but more to do with the original games ideas purchased, some of which are not worthy of conversion to a home computer. It highlights the pressure to find new material under which major software conglomerates today tend to find themselves, resulting, sadly, in an 'almost anything will go as long as it's marketed brightly' attitude.

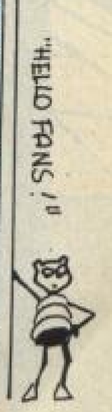
This sort of pressure is then placed on programmers and the result may well be to stifle real talent. Ocean, I hasten to add, can also point to their support of freelance programming teams like Denton Designs and (64 to Spectrum conversions) Platinum Productions, who between them have been very unstifled. There are pros and cons in every situation. It remains to be seen whether the move towards monopoly in the games industry provides us all with a better or worse service, but let's hope that the merging of various interests will still leave the individual spirit of games programmers free to be creative.

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ZZAP! RRAP

HOW ABOUT A POKE IN THE EYE?

Dear Lloyd,
Would you believe it if I told you that I had a poke that gives infinite lives on every game? No you wouldn't??? Well damn right. You're haven't. I
Gavin Megnauth, Reading, Berkshire
PS Is this the shortest letter ever to appear in ZZAP! (hint hint).

No. Is that the shortest answer?
LM

A lot of lively rrapin' going down this month, I can tell you. I've been wading in through the snow that hit Ludlow this month, making it impossible to cycle down the hill. 'Sacrifice' is my middle name, however, so here I am again, with a bunch of your letters moanin' an' groanin' and just occasionally saying something delightful! We kick off with letter of the month, earning its writer the coveted £20 worth of free software.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

GET THE TIMING RIGHT

Dear Lloyd,
Thanks very much for the magazine which is really out of this world (and most newsagents as it sells so well). Rockford is zarjaz and if 'Thing' so much as lays the tip of his coil on him, it will be the dreaded page 202 treatment. Oli Frey's drawings are excellent and really make the magazine stand out (although the free Christmas poster was a bit on the gruesome side).

After that grovelling, I do have one teeny-weeny half-atom-big complaint. You have previewed or included in the News Flash a number of supposedly sizzling games, which when reviewed are much less so (take *Wizardry*, for instance).

In your October issue, you previewed *Quake Minus One*, but despite numerous promises, you haven't yet reviewed it (the same goes for *Mercenary*, but yes, I understand what you have to go through to meet the deadlines etc, so I'm not angry at that).

I was in Reading shopping (and getting dragged into Marks & Spencers by my mum) when I decided to buy a game. I couldn't find much that I really liked that you had reviewed, but in your preview, you said that *Quake* would probably be good, and quite by chance, Boots had the game. So I bought it, but on loading, the game instructions, although long, were not really adequate, and to a first time player like me, around five different sirens, klaxons and hooters blaring through the TV speaker, and a baffling set of icons, four of which I found appeared very similar on a black and white TV, rather put me off. Anyway, I persevered until . . . shock horror! The game crashed! I tried many subsequent loadings on both sides of the cassette with the same result. Now however, unfortunate though this may sound, it did give me the chance to change the game for a different one.

But on returning to Boots at Basingstoke, they said that they didn't sell it, and I would have to return it to the Reading branch. Strange as Boots Basingstoke's computer department is around 5 times larger of that at Reading. Anyway, after a bitterly cold train ride running 32 minutes late, I managed to exchange the game for *Scarabaeus*, which is brilliant and very atmospheric, and sends shivers down my spine every time I play it.

Well I really needed to get that off my chest and have a good moan at Boots, for lack of co-operation, Monolith for, in my opinion, a weird and difficult to get into game, and very slightly at you for hinting at the fact it was good over four months ago.

I'm dying to find out what you think of *Quake*, so fail to review it next month at your peril!

Meanwhile, hands off Rockford and keep up the brilliant mag.
Daniel Dalton, Basingstoke, Hampshire
PS You know that TV advert for Brooke Bond Choicest Blend tea? The one with the man with the teacup telling you not to tell everyone because there may not be enough to go round? Yes that one — with half the screen blanked off. Well my theory is that Gary Liddon has bought up most of this tea, and that is why there is a shortage of it. Is it true?

The reason why both Quake and Mercenary were mentioned in the news or previewed long before the reviews appeared is very simple. We got to see early demos and then partially complete versions months and months before the games were actually released. Surely you can't blame anyone for wanting to share the info with you? Naturally, it isn't possible to determine how the finished product will be at such an early stage, and sometimes a demo that has tremendous potential as a game, may fail to do it justice later when it's finished. In the case of Wizardry, the person who previewed it (also an incomplete version at the time) at the Edge premises, thought it looked very good, but he was not the persons back in Ludlow who ended up reviewing it — and they had somewhat different feelings about the game when they had done so.

As to the alarming world shortage of tea — yes, every bit of it is true. Liddon even sleeps on tea (not the drink, the tea bags because they make a comfortable mattress) — but that's another story.
LM



NOT CAUGHT OUT

Dear Lloyd
I was glad to see in February's issue that your reviewers were not caught in the current of OTT advertising heaped on Ocean's *Rambo* and gave a well balanced and subjective assessment of the game. Can I just say that I have been pleased recently with the new generation of games which find a new use for the joystick button (as opposed to 2 means of killing).

Now, I'm not trying to be Mr Virtuous, but ever since the original Space Invaders that little button has been a means of killing as many 'whatevers' in as little time. Rather like the american cinema's current obsession with 'commie-bashing' I at times find computer games lacking in taste and morality.

Commando and *Rambo* and that generation of game have become very popular recently among young children and they contribute to the state of mind shared by many young people today. *LCP* proved that sport simulations are not alone and that computer games can still hold interest in other ways than destruction.
Jon Baker, Thame, Oxon
PS In regards to Ravin Dhokia's letter in issue 10 I too find that a bit of pressure on the C2N top helps difficult programs to load.

I don't think you can blame Ocean for 'hyping' one of their games, especially Rambo *because they have probably had to pay a pretty hefty licence fee for the rights. However, the function of ZZAP! reviewers is to assess a game regardless of its promotion. After all, the nature of the promotion, whether low key or OTT, should have nothing to do with how good or bad the game itself may be. I'm pleased to see that you feel* LCP *is a worthy program. I have received loads of very uncomplimentary letters about the pet people. And, as you will see in this column, lots of readers seem to think Gaz etc have lost their marbles for saying LCP is good. Still, if we all agreed on everything it would be a boring world, wouldn't it?*
LM

ZZAP! RRAP

YOU NEED A MANAGER, KID

Dear Jools Riggers,
Since the beginning of ZZAP! 64 you have earned yourself a reputation of being a smarmy little git so therefore I offer myself to be your manager. I would change your image into someone people would respect and be jealous of. If you do not take up my offer I am afraid I can imagine you jumping out of an aeroplane and breaking your neck on landing.
Yours Respectfully,
Barnaby Payne, Kenilworth, Warwickshire

You're too late, Barnaby, Julian is already under management, Lloyd Mangram Inc has the controlling interest and I only take 25% of all UK earnings. However, if you wish to talk turkey about the world rights in Julian Rignall, I might be interested.
LM

ZZAP! MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

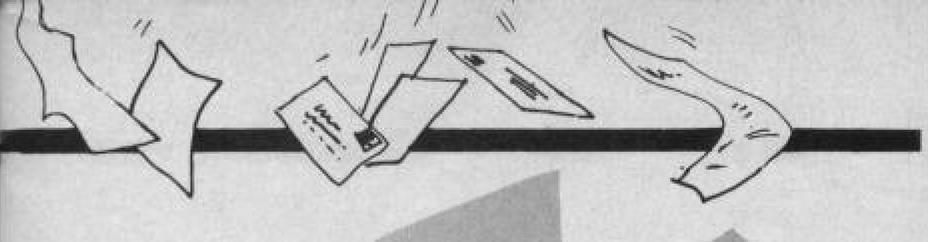
Dear Lloyd,
1986 was starting to look a bit grim for me what with various domestic problems that, if they were printed here, would have you crying all over my thermal paper (all say aaah!). Not to mention my usual PMT which were up to their tricks again. After loading *Mercenary* for the 9th time just to have my 64 reset itself, I finally gave up. So it was on the 8th of January that I went to bed, suicidally depressed and thinking that ZZAP! (after the Christmas hols) wouldn't be out for another week — Gasp! I woke up the next morning, still depressed, but was immediately cheered by the sight of my ZZAP! lying amongst some letters on the floor. Deciding not to read it until later, on the grounds that I wouldn't put it down once started, I opened up my mail. Oh joy, whoopee, yahoo, (get the gist?), a voucher for twenty pounds — 'Letter of the Month' — GREAT! I quickly tore open my ZZAP! and sure enough, there was my letter, although you spelt my name wrongly! I spent the rest of the morning in a state of ecstatic delirium. At last, I've won something, hooray! Just before lunch, a parcel arrived for me, it was soft and crinkly, what could it be? A ZZAP! Cap 'n T-shirt that's what — yippee! Back to my ZZAP! — runner-up in the Top 30, oh happy days!
Erm . . . I digress, all I want to say is thanks, no, a thousand thanks, for cheering me up and giving my wallet a much needed boost after the Xmas financial over-exertions. The prizes are fantastic and are very much appreciated.
Peter Williams, Craven Arms, Shropshire
PS My LCP Conrad, was delighted to see his name in print in his favourite mag. I think he wants me to get him a room mate with the voucher.

Yeah — I called you 'Peter Willain', didn't I. Woops — can't blame 'Art' for that one. Perhaps it was your handwriting (that's my story anyway — sue if you dare). I'll get Gary to ask Andrew Wright of Activision to look into the matter of an LCP mate for Conrad, although following the old American Hays code for films, they'll only be allowed to be on the bed at the same time as long as both their feet are touching the ground.
LM

A BIASED EMPIRE

Dear Lloyd
I'm sorry it has come to this, but it really is the last straw. What's happening to Newsfield Publications? The simple answer is you are becoming an empire. You're distancing yourself from your readership. Others may disagree, but for me you are no longer the magazine to buy. I used to own a Spectrum, a very good machine at the price. I remember the first days of your success. I bought CRASH and found a lively informative periodical. In those days you were completely honest. Reviews were just that. They weren't the load of biased rubbish you are expected to read now.
I know you team up with certain software house/ distributors for example Gremlin Graphics or US Gold. It doesn't do any good at all. Take the Lucasfilm connection. Their games are all you seem to review at the moment. And talking of reviews, get some 'human' reviewers, not supercrazed arcade freaks who do nothing each day except play games. Not all of us are like that.
So my first point is review games intelligently. CRASH manages to do this why can't you? For example take *Little Computer People*. LASTABILITY 96 per cent?!
If your reviewers had played the game for more than an hour they would have realised the limitedness of the whole thing. To date this is what my nameless creature can do: PLAY RECORD, DANCE, TYPE A LETTER, EAT, PLAY PIANO, MAKE A FIRE, READ NEWSPAPER, USE COMPUTER, FEED DOG, HAVE A SHOWER.
After that you are stuck with a useless cassette and some awful documentation. On that count LASTABILITY should be about 45 per cent. The majority of the ratings were based on novelty value which wears off very quickly.
Point two, review games as they come out not as they are due in several months. This way games that have come out may be read about before purchase. I bought *Commando* in November. Now it is February, and you have only just reviewed it. I know this is due to the way the magazine must be written, but I'm sure the situation could be improved immensely.
Third, cut down on interviews with program authors and review the games instead. I mean you are primarily a review magazine. Reviews are what I and many of my friends wish to see.
I think your attitude is that no matter what you say in your magazine it will be bought. I don't agree. You are getting smaller, scrappier, more untidy and above all the price has gone up. Just a small niggle, you didn't even warn us. Such neglect. As far as I am concerned Roger Kean can jump off a cliff. I suppose he will be laughing all the way to the bank.
I am giving you three months to sort your deranged self out. If by the end of that period you have not picked up in quality, you will have lost a previously loyal reader.
So long and farewell, I shall miss you not.
Ashley Hynds, Edgebaston, Birmingham

I am sorry you think we are all dishonest, Ashley, but you really ought to consider what you say before you say it. For a start off, when have we 'teamed up' with distributors/software houses? The implication is that our reviews are now all bought and paid for by the names you suggest. In which case all their games would have been Sizzlers at the least if not Gold Medals. Just check back through some issues and make a count, and you'll soon see that this accusation is a load of cobblers. A bigger load of cobblers is that we only review Lucasfilm games. C'mon you wimpish nerd, Lucasfilm have only had FOUR games out to date! Now (and this gets better with every line), you say 'get some human reviewers, not arcade freaks who play games all day', and then a bit later you accuse them of not having even played LCP for more than an hour!! As to that, we have already pointed out that ZZAP! reviewed the disk version as there wasn't a cassette version available at the time — and the (terribly dishonest, I know) review states clearly DISK ONLY at the top.
What else have we here, oh yes. You seem confused as to how we should treat the reviews, saying on one hand that they should be done when the game comes out, not too early, and then in the next sentence you accuse us of not having reviewed a game until after it had been released. What do you want?
Articles about and interviews with programmers attract a lot of interest from readers, whatever you may think, and whoever said ZZAP! was primarily a review magazine? That may be one of the most single important aspects, but it isn't the lot. Neither do we ever consider that people will buy ZZAP! whatever we say. You clearly have a very narrow concept of what a magazine is about or what the people are like who work on one. As to your remarks about Mr Kean, I choose to treat them with the contempt they deserve.
LM



GOING DOWNHILL

Dear Lloyd,
I can be quiet no longer. The predicament of your magazine is very worrying. I am referring to the decreasing number of reviews, pages and now the increase in price. In issue 1 you had over 35 reviews but since then the general trend has been declining.

Now you are asking readers to pay an extra 5p. I cannot see any point to this at all unless you are trying to lose readers. If you could explain this I and, I am sure, many other readers would be grateful.

I would also like to take this chance to say how strongly I disagree with Tim Preston's view of Gary Penn. In my opinion Penn is the best reviewer in ZZAP! because he is not afraid to say he doesn't like a game just because it is written by a large company. Also unlike Rignall, Gary gets straight to the point with his comments.

Steven Wardlaw, Shotts, Lanarkshire

The number of pages in an issue and certainly the number of games reviewed depends very heavily on the release of games to be reviewed. This seems a fairly obvious connection to me anyway. As I reply to this letter, Gary, Julian and Gary are tearing their hair out because at the moment there are only six games up for review! The way life works out, the moment this issue has gone beyond the point of no return, every software house in the land will release five titles and we'll never be able to catch up properly! As for the 5p price rise — inflation hits everything you know, like paper and printing costs. The next letter writer has a slightly different view on the subject . . .
LM

OFFSETTING PRICE RISES

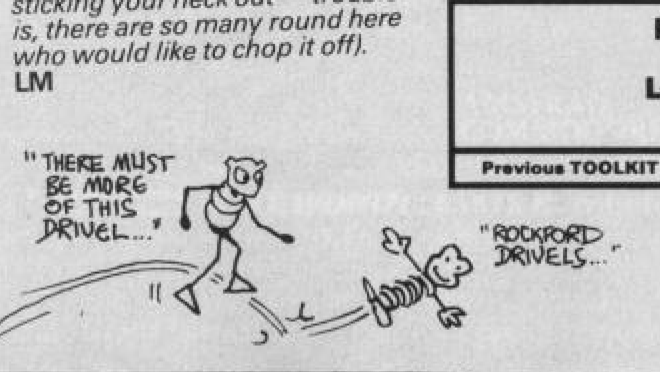
Dear Lloyd
I have just received my ZZAP! 64 Binder and have inserted all copies of the magazine. May I congratulate someone at ZZAP! on the selection and design of the binder, because it is magnificent. It is by far the best binder I have ever purchased, well worth the £4.50. I can now stand all my copies of ZZAP! beside my 64 and refer to the issues with ease. Well done.

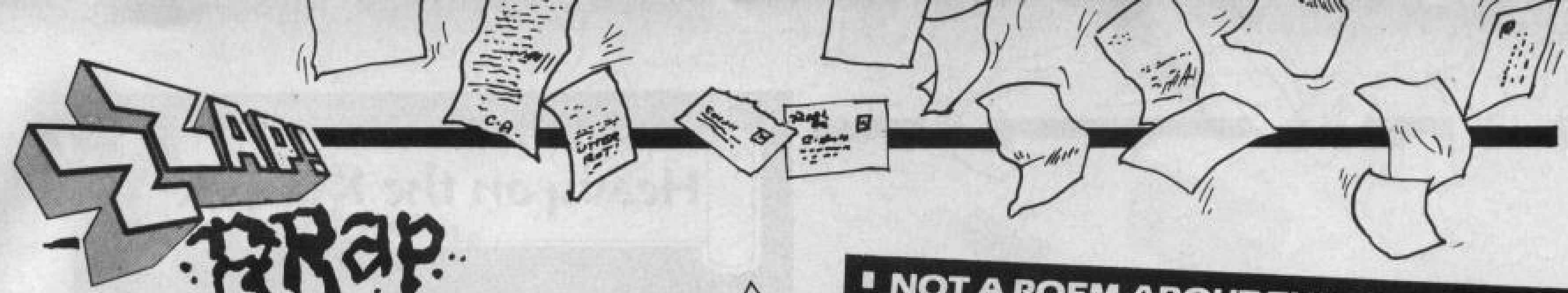
I now ask, when the 12th issue has been published, will you be offering an 'index' to make things even easier to refer to?

ZZAP! 64 has stayed at 95p for almost twelve months now so it must be in the pipeline for an increase before too long. Normally magazines jump about 10p on increase.

If you were to increase the cost now to one pound and well worth it, makes it easier to pay a pound anyway, it could possibly delay an increase of 10p or more, by twelve months. — YES? —
J Westmacott, Ronkswood, Worcester

How right you are! As you now know! There's usually a resistance to going over the pound barrier, although at some stage it may have to be considered, no doubt. Thanks for the comments on the ZZAP! Binder, I'll pass them on to those responsible up in 'Art'. They feel so left out, poor things, and usually just get thumped for putting Saboteur pics in Geoff Capes reviews! An index is certainly on the cards, I'm told (though I was told to shut up when I asked) and, who knows, may even appear (logically) in this issue. (There's nothing like sticking your neck out — trouble is, there are so many round here who would like to chop it off).
LM





REVVING UP

Dear ZZAP!
I am writing to query your test of Firebirds *Revs*. I awaited your review of the simulator as I normally find your reviews and tests very fair (I have every great issue), up until now.

You say, and I quote: 'The car is controlled using either the keyboard or keyboard and joystick together'. But when I read the instruction manual with my copy, I find it says you can use keyboard only, keyboard, joystick and steering paddle or analogue joystick. What is a steering paddle? Where do I get one from and why does your review say different? Trying to use the simulator even after 3 hours practice using the keyboard is very difficult.

I look forward to your answers soon.
Duncan Trigg, Rotherwick, Nr Basingstoke, Hampshire

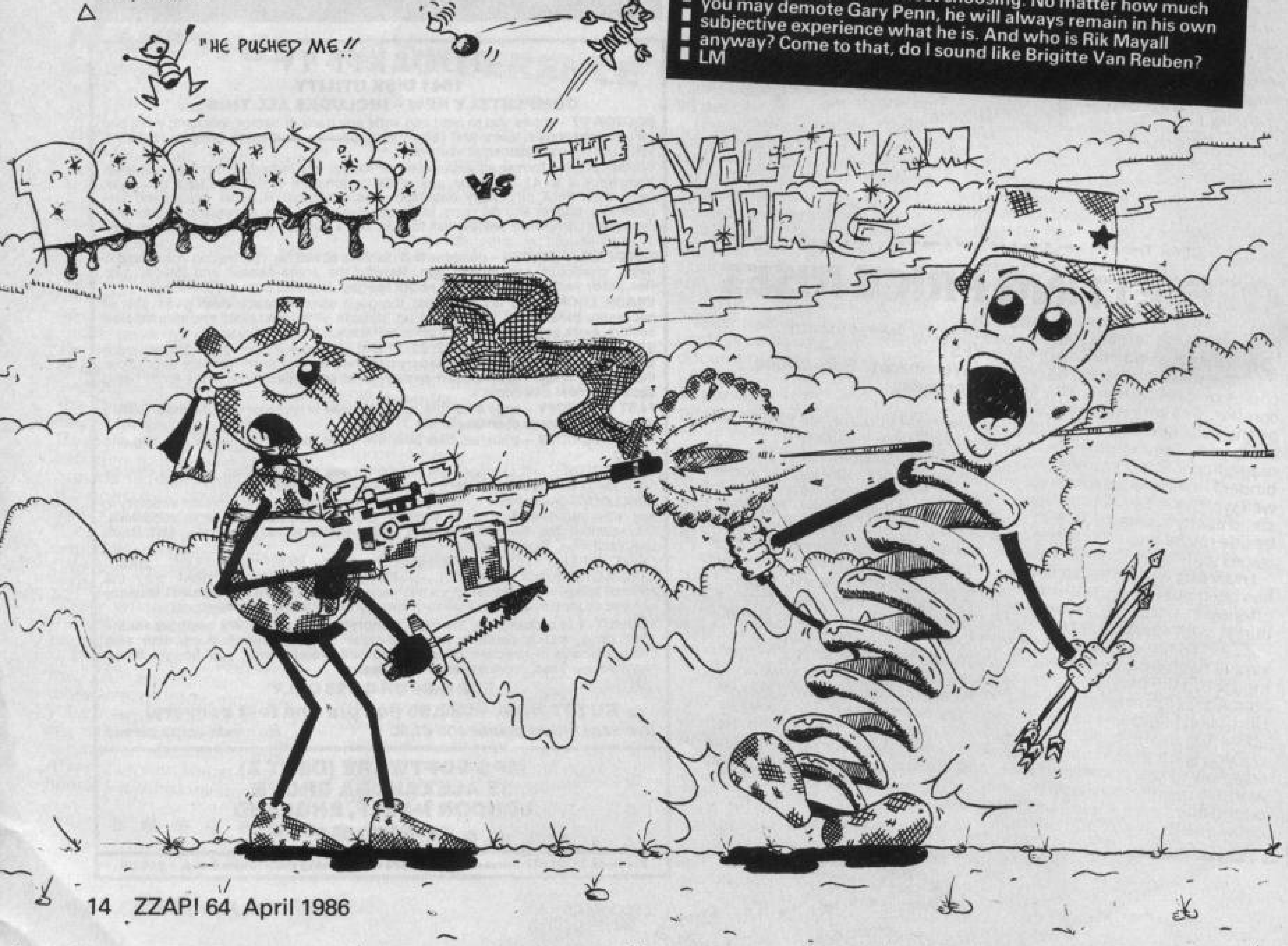
Our review doesn't say anything different from what you say the manual says: you can use the keyboard only or the keyboard with a joystick (or paddles). The review also states that an analogue joystick is needed. These aren't that commonly found in shops any more, though they are available. I don't know where you can find paddles — again they were more common in the old Atari VCS days. A paddle is like an old fashioned volume control. Commodore make them.

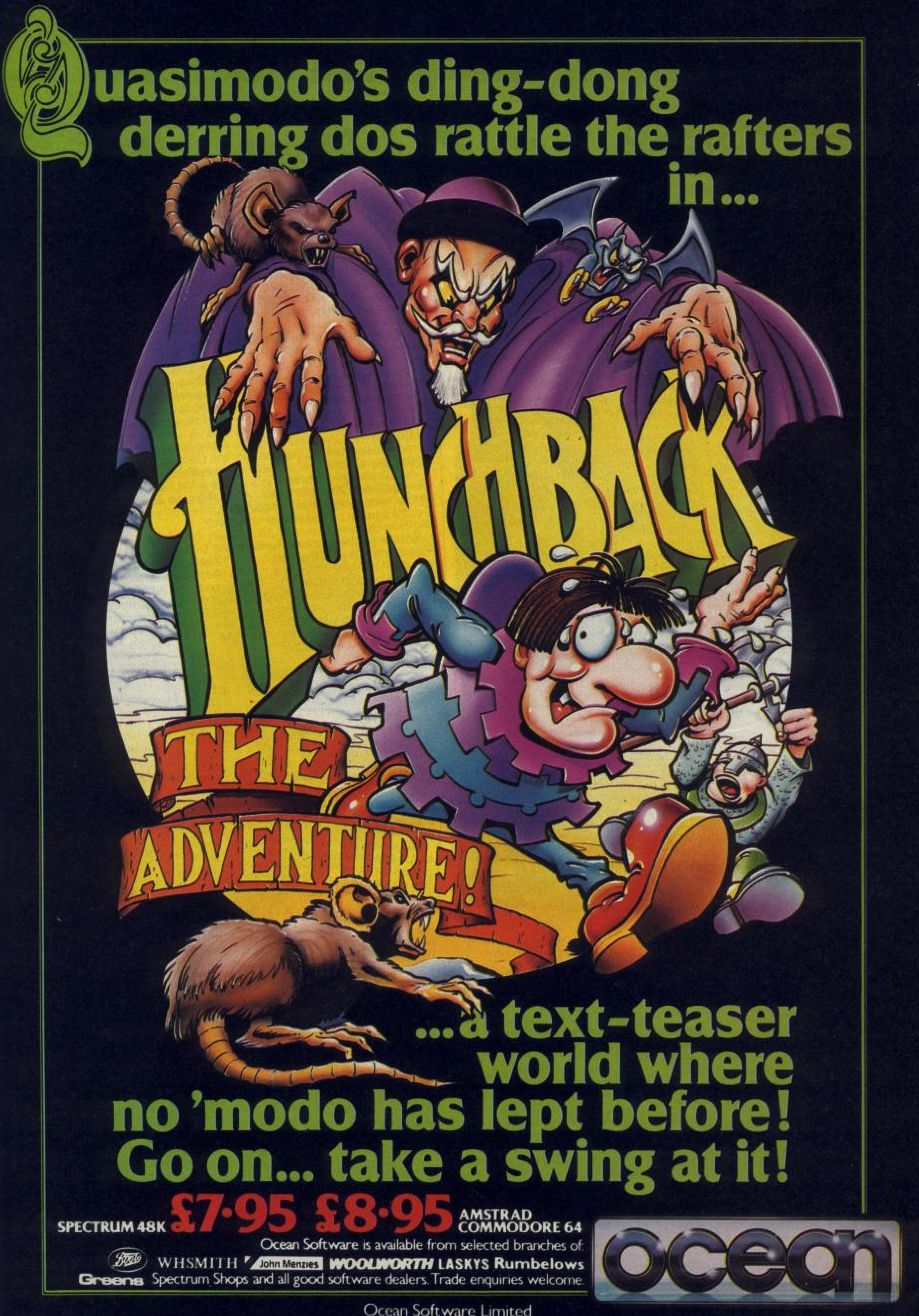
There seems to have been some confusion altogether about this review, though really, I fail to see why. One particular WH Smith branch apparently contacted our Circulations Manager saying that they had had complaints that ZZAP! reviews had become unreliable and so people were complaining to them with the result that they would have to cut their monthly order. The review in question was Revs. I can't see that the review is in any way misleading.
LM

NOT A POEM ABOUT THE GULAG ARCHIPELAGO

Thatcher is wrong
Capitalism is bad
Public ownership unfortunately can never work in practice
Meat is murder
Famous existentialist figures such as Jean Paul Satre are, by their very popularity, hypocritical to the point of obscurity
ZZAP! 64 must surely be THE leading publication circulating the underground Anarchist movement of the modern day
I now demote Gary Penn to a nine year old
Every six seconds an animal dies in a British laboratory
The very existence of in — or external funding within an active political uprising — indirectly constitutes a capitalist counter revolutionary barrier that can be breached only by the disowning of the state in all aspects of the movement
Ronnie 'Rambo' Raygun is a dangerous psycopath
Blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah
Rik Mayall is God
But I'm an atheist
Never mind, I'm sure you aren't
The End
Print this you sons of silly persons.
The End Again.
Yours sincerely
Ivan (an 'Anarchist For Action'), Cheltenham

As associates of the Ludlow Young Farmers, members of the ZZAP! team cannot tolerate the concept of cruelly pulling crisp, young vegetables from the ground by their roots. Existentially speaking (and I just know Camus would have approved) we believe cloven hooved animals have a higher range of self determination than innocent vegetables, and that in choosing to live in famers' fields they are tacitly conniving at their own nemesis. And should you argue that they do not choose, then in so doing they are in effect choosing. No matter how much you may demote Gary Penn, he will always remain in his own subjective experience what he is. And who is Rik Mayall anyway? Come to that, do I sound like Brigitte Van Reuben?
LM




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ocean

ZZAP! RRAP

I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY LCP PROBLEMS

Dear ZZAP!
My son has just got his own *LCP*. So whilst he was at school I loaded the computer and at 12.45 pm the door opened and in came our *LCP*. We politely said HELLO and during the afternoon our *LCP* made a lovely fire, played records, danced and made phone calls to me, we got on very well, in fact I spent a most enjoyable afternoon with him.

However, I feel a little sad as our *LCP* doesn't seem to have a name. He signs his letters 'your friend', is this because he is on cassette and not on disk? I was reading your magazine and noted Phantom Noddy Killer is having the same problem with Kent as we are with our *LCP* as he also refuses to go to bed and seems to have a weak bladder. Do you think we are giving him too much fluid? Although today I did take his mind off a visit to the loo — I distracted him and asked him to dance, which he did, but immediately he stopped dancing and off to the loo he went.

So I'll keep perservering and see if I can keep his mind off the loo. One more thing, how can our *LCP* get a flat mate as then my son and I can have a little friend each, as we may argue who's friend is he?

Can any of your readers tell us how we can get our *LCP* to play cards with us. He tells me he will play a card game, as he says he has a packet of playing cards. He goes into the room upstairs, but he never brings the cards out and I have asked him if he can play poker or card war and each time he nods his head. But after my request to him, he taps on the TV screen. PLEASE WHAT AM I DOING WRONG?!

Thank you very much, for reading my letter, must go now, as I can talk to my friend before my son comes home. Is this normal or should I see a doctor?
Mrs BA Jackson, Mile Oak, Staffs

I have received many letters like this, complaining that their pet person hasn't a name and won't do some of the things our review suggested he would. When we reviewed LCP, we reviewed the **disk** *version, and at that time we were told that there wouldn't be a cassette version as it would not be possible. Activision decided otherwise and put out an inferior cassette version. Unfortunately, a 'House on Cassette' only attracts anonymous LCPs who can play cards but don't own any, who own a pitiful record collection and whose working knowledge of the piano is pretty basic. As to your little fellow's bladder problems — well, you've obviously got a problem, although have you considered the old adage, that pets often take after their owners? I shouldn't worry about seeing a doctor because, you know dearie, you're not really doing anything wrong. This is very normal behaviour for a well balanced housewife. At least this way you're home waiting with your son's tea ready (Liddon permitting) instead of out walking the dog.*
LM

Dear ZZAP!
Every ZZAP! reader in the country is sitting on the edge of his or her seat. One burning question is waiting to be answered:-

How many Z's were there in issue 5 of ZZAP!?

But come to think of it, there's more than one question; where was the x in the on court tennis competition?

Which was the best cartoon of Roland Rat? What were the armchair sports for Lloyd .... sorry Lazy slobs?

Just how many people entered the ZZAP! quiz even though some berk in art added 2 extra square on the end of 'Suicide Express'?

What was the funniest Russ Abbot type joke? Why didn't you print it? Was it dirty? Where were the bits of *Entombed* map we were told were there? Is the pressure getting to the competition Minion? If so then why not trade him (or her) in for a more reliable model? And why does ZZAP! never print any of the answers to their competitions?
Antony Lowe, Lymm, Cheshire

It's simply amazing how much time arranging, picking and printing the results of the competitions takes as it is, without doing all the answers and showing the results of individual's work (which we do occasionally). But I've asked the Comps minion to do something about it, so we'll see what happens.

As to the Zs, there were (give or take a percentage point or two):
Two thousand, six hundred and seventy seven I think.
The x was — just there.
And loads entered the Quiz despite the extra squares (that was the whole point, you berk — it was a trick question to see how on the ball you were)!
LM

WHAT GIVES?

Dear Lloyd,
No! No! Not again! You at Ludlow have done it again! Why don't you make sure, on page 9 (Feb issue), you put Sizzler on the game(s) you give the awards to! This time you didn't put Sizzler in the index under *Fight Night*!

Also, how is Martin Galway's name spelt with one 'l' like you put on the cover or with two 'l's like on page 23 under the review of the game *Rambo*.

What kind of a review is the one you have given *Deus Ex Machina*. It's got no ratings. The ratings I think are extremely important because I, and many other people I know, take the ratings very seriously. It can often jog my mind from buying a game.

Apart from those errors the mag is going well and I enjoy reading it.
Alistair O Hinton, Shalford, Surrey

Well (I was always brought up to believe that anyone who starts a sentence with 'well', is about to tell you a lie), well — the first two items in your letter do refer to mistakes. Martin Galway is spelled with one 'l' — still, we do a lot better than the Sunday Observer and Sunday Times! The Deus Ex Machina *review, however, was NOT a mistake. It is hardly the sort of program you can give ratings to in the ordinary sense. Besides which, what is this constant obsession with ratings. Don't you READ what the reviewers have to say and make some judgement based on that? Okay, so that particular 'review' was more of an article than a review, but it described the program well, and gave some critical analysis. Life gets boring if everything has to follow a pre-set standard — just occasionally the ZZAP! team gets a touch of anarchy.*
LM

MISLEADING SCREENS

Dear ZZAP!
I was wondering if you are aware about the screen shots of certain games in adverts which are extremely cunning in their presentation, and which could easily catch out the unsuspecting customer. I am refering to the supposedly 'legal' advertisement of *Hypersports* by Imagine; the screen picture looked superb, and I rushed out and bought the game. Although I was still pleased with it, it did vary from the screen picture, and disappointed me to think I had spent all my money on a game which I was not entirely satisfied. I re-read the advert and found, in tiny black print at the bottom of the page, that the screen shots were from the arcade version. Also, concerning the same point, in ZZAP! issue 9 there is the painting instead of the photograph, and although much more obvious, might attract the unsuspecting 64 owner. Many adverts have similar captions — 'screen picture may vary from the screen shot — which is legal, but is a cunning way of saying that the game may be actually rubbish and not as brilliant as depicted. This one mistake has made me very sceptical and I look carefully at the screen shots and small print.

This game may cost around £9 to £10, the mistake made by the buyer is expensive.

The software companies surely must have realised that if the small print was read then the overall impression of the game would be one of a bad and over-priced game which is hidden from public scepticism.

Has anybody else made the same mistake?

However, there are games which are expertly advertised and which are good games.
John Gare, Leigh-On-Sea, Essex

Quite often the packaging is arranged ahead of a finished version of the game, necessitating the use of alternative screen shots. This is more often the case with Spectrum versions, where packaging is joint for Spectrum and 64, than it is with the 64 conversions from arcade originals. My personal feeling is that you're right, and that at the end of the day it does the software company more harm than good, and can obviously mislead the public
LM

GIVE US THE INFO

Dear Lloyd
Many points. First of all 'Thing' — will someone please weld him to the floor and stop him invading the margins. Compared to Rockford he is a lower form of life (or is that death)?

Is Gary Liddon small in real life? Why does he always appear to be smaller than Jaz and Gaz? Is it prejudice against a new member?
Now questions!
1) How big is ZZAP! Towers?
2) How many C-64's do you have at ZZAP! Towers?
3) Do any of you possess a C-128?
4) What type of a lawnmower does Jaz use to cut his hair? Or does he use a knife and fork?
Finally:
5) How long do you play a game for before reviewing it?

Florix Grabundae, Splundig vur thrigg.
Martin Dixon, Paddock Wood, Kent

Some extremely important questions here, Martin, and fearlessly will they be answered. There IS no real life for Gary Liddon, as an extreme existentialist only his subjective reality counts, which is a snotty nosed way of saying that he does his own thing, as to his size, it doesn't matter how big he is, it's what he does with it that counts. In answer to the remainder of your questions:
1) Big enough to house Gary Liddon — how big should it be?
2) Seven, but only one works (at a time).
3) No, we prefer the C5.
4) He goes to the local gardening centre for a quick strim, and his mummy and daddy told him that fingers were invented before knives and forks.
Finally:
5) How long is a piece of string?
LM

PRETENTIOUS GARBAGE

Dear ZZAP!
I was enjoying reading through ZZAP! issue 10 one day until I read the Art Gallery section. The art is great but Miss Van Reuben's commentary is pathetic (and that's being nice). It's a computer magazine, so don't read so much into simple art. When I started reading the section I thought she was writing like that for a joke!

Also there were many words I didn't understand (and I'm not thick!) so cut it out. It's a good section but without that stupid commentary.

Just to create more disorder I will state that *LCP* kits are junk, they are so bo-o-o-oring. I enjoyed a friend's pet person for an hour having a good laugh but then became bored out of my skull.

Please take note, as I hate to be a miseryguts and many people I know agree with me on both counts.
David Degville, Walsall, W Midlands

This puts me in a difficult spot, since I hate (as everyone knows, who knows me well) to run down a colleague. So I thought the best thing to do would be to ask Ms Van Reuben herself to comment on the above. Excuse us please, while we pause to change typeface . . .

David Degville, in this, his first work for the pen and paper, has demonstrated a Terpsichorean agility with words more commonly associated with *Papio hamadryas*. This particular genus of creature tends to see all things as simple, so I say to you, young man, look deep beyond the integumental meanings, attempt to discern what lies within the substructure and aspirate that you may learn to appreciate. Your present desire to extirpate what you so evidently fear to understand is holding you back from true enlightenment and the art of motorcycle maintenance. In other words — on yer bike, laddie!

There we go then for another month. Hang in there Ashley, we may even improve yet within your three month deadline. You have to for my sake, since I always get hit for being rude to a reader and perhaps losing them to some other equally unscrupulous, money grubbing, uncaring publisher of Commodore magazines!

Keep writing in to let us know how you feel about everything. We do take note (well I do anyway) of the points you all make. One thing I would like to know is what ZZAP! readers generally feel about the Compunet pages and the Art Gallery (Brigitte notwithstanding!) and also the new Shadow Spiel newsy/previewsy/gossipy bit. Write to: ZAAP! RRAP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.

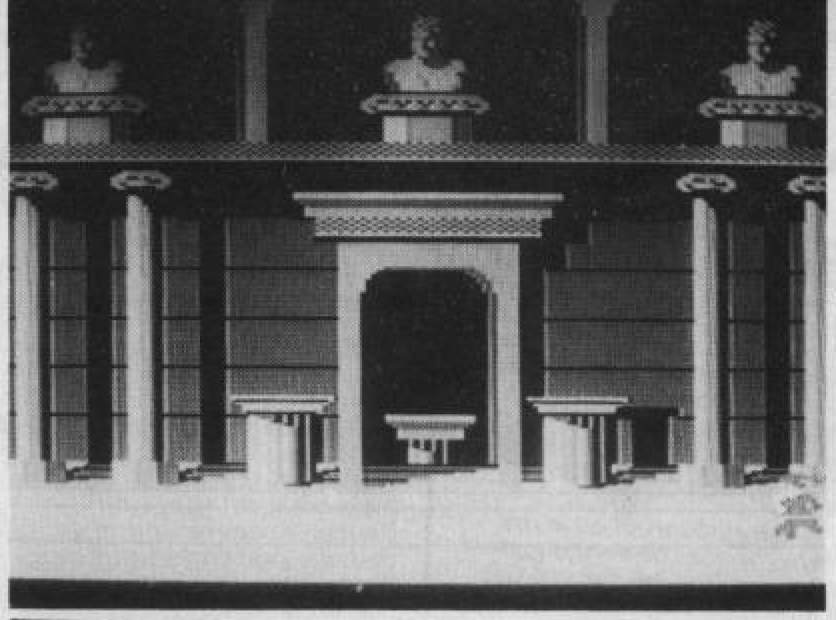
LOVE BYTES

Dear Gary Penn,
Are you related to Sean Penn? If so, can you send me her (meaning Madonna of course!), Sean's and your autographs? I'll even forgive you for nearly killing Adam!

Dear J♥lian Rign♥ll,
After seeing your picture in my brother's ZZAP! 64, I fell totally in love. You're really gorgeous. Let's face it, I love you! I even named my yo-yo Julian after you. Please could you send me a signed photo. I would treasure it forever.
Love you forever,
Beverley Rouse x x x, Sawbridgeworth, Herts

What is this? Smash Hits or something! Oddly enough, we named our Julian yo-yo too. I asked Jaz if he had any publicity stills for you, but the only one we could find was this one — hope you like it. By the way, Gary is yelling at me that he DID NOT kill Adam, Didn't, didn't, didn't — it was CRASH's Robin Candy whodunnit when Gary wasn't looking.
LM

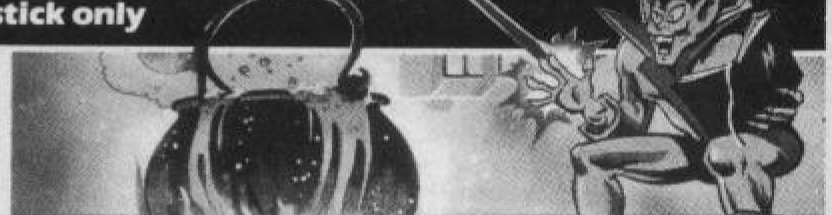




One of the more impressive backdrops — Mythological Greece.

TIME TUNNEL

US Gold, £9.95 cass, joystick only



As you might have guessed, *Time Tunnel* is all about travelling through time. But did you guess that it's an arcade adventure starring a gnome? No? Well stroll on clever clogs, because it is. Anyway, playing that Gnome you must recover the parts of a map which, when assembled, explain how he can become Gnome king. The pieces are scattered throughout history, so quite a bit of travelling needs to be done before the task is completed.

To recover the map you have to solve seven torturous puzzles within the game (one in each time zone). These puzzles are completed by using the various objects found in different times. Quite a few of the puzzle-solving items need to be taken from one period of history to another before a problem can be solved — quite a hefty task.

The game commences with the Gnome relaxing in his living room in Gnome Mansion. Starting from here you must first get the time machine operational before you are able to whizz off through time. The Gnome is completely joystick controlled and can accomplish quite a few actions, depending on the situation he's in. Objects can be picked up, dropped, set in motion or moved if he's standing near them (doors, lifts etc). Also, a lightning bolt can be fired when facing left or right. However, the Gnome has a problem as he can only carry one object at a time, but don't despair — Gnome has a closet! This can be entered by holding down the fire button for a few seconds. An object can then be dropped there for retrieval later in the game, but unfortunately only eight items can be left in the closet at once. The closet can be called up at any time, no matter where Gnome is in history.



If further American arcade adventures are going to make their way across the Atlantic, they will have to be better than this if they are to compete with the quality of British software. However, Time Tunnel isn't so bad and it did prove an enjoyable romp for a short while, despite the poor graphics and abysmal sound (although having said that, I do like the backdrops in Mythological Greece).

Once you have the time machine fully operational, the adventure proper can begin. There are seven varied and very different periods of time to be visited — eight if you include the present. The seven time zones are the Stone Age (9,600 BC), Magical Persia (893 BC), Mythological Greece (86 BC), Colonial Salem (1692), California Gold Rush (1849), Intergalactic Spaceship (3456) and finally The Black Hole (9999). The various locations in each period 'flick' when moving from one to the other.

There are many objects within each time zone, but the player must sort out the wheat from the chaff before being able to solve the puzzles. The instructions give some clues about what you're supposed to do in each period, but if you really get stuck then you can send off to US Gold for a hint sheet (although it does cost fifty pence).



It would be so easy just to slag Time Tunnel. *Graphically it* is *awful and in the audio dept things aren't much better, but there's something about it that makes you want to keep on playing. Weird. One of the nice points about* Time Tunnel *is the gnome's ability to interact with the background quite freely. The 'obscure obviousness' of the solutions is great, so you really feel like you've achieved something when a puzzle is solved. I wouldn't actually recommend* Time Tunnel *to anyone other than a real arcade adventurer, but there is some addictive streak in it. If you feel that you can bear to play a game without mega graphics and sound, and you haven't lost sight of the fact that in the end you buy a game just for that, then this may be one for you.*



Time Tunnel *just about sums up this game perfectly — it looks like a Commodore has been sent back several years into the past and brought back to the present with an ancient program loaded into it. The primitive graphics are really pathetic, with no depth or detail to the backdrops. The sprites are just as bad and the goblin looks like a demented hunchback cripple. The program allows one game to go on until you either solve it or switch off, making it all rather boring. I'm surprised that US Gold have released this — it's awful.*

Presentation 61%
Large, informative and colourful poster style instructions, but not much else.

Graphics 44%
Poor sprites and generally simple, drab backdrops, although some are very good.

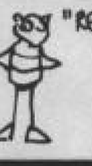
Sound 23%
The volume knob on the telly is a God-send.

Hookability 60%
Although it doesn't look anything special and you know it isn't, there is some initial appeal.

Lastability 51%
The game is quite addictive and the puzzles aren't overly difficult, but they are rewarding to solve.

Value For Money 43%
Overpriced for what it has to offer.

Overall 49%
A barely average arcade adventure.



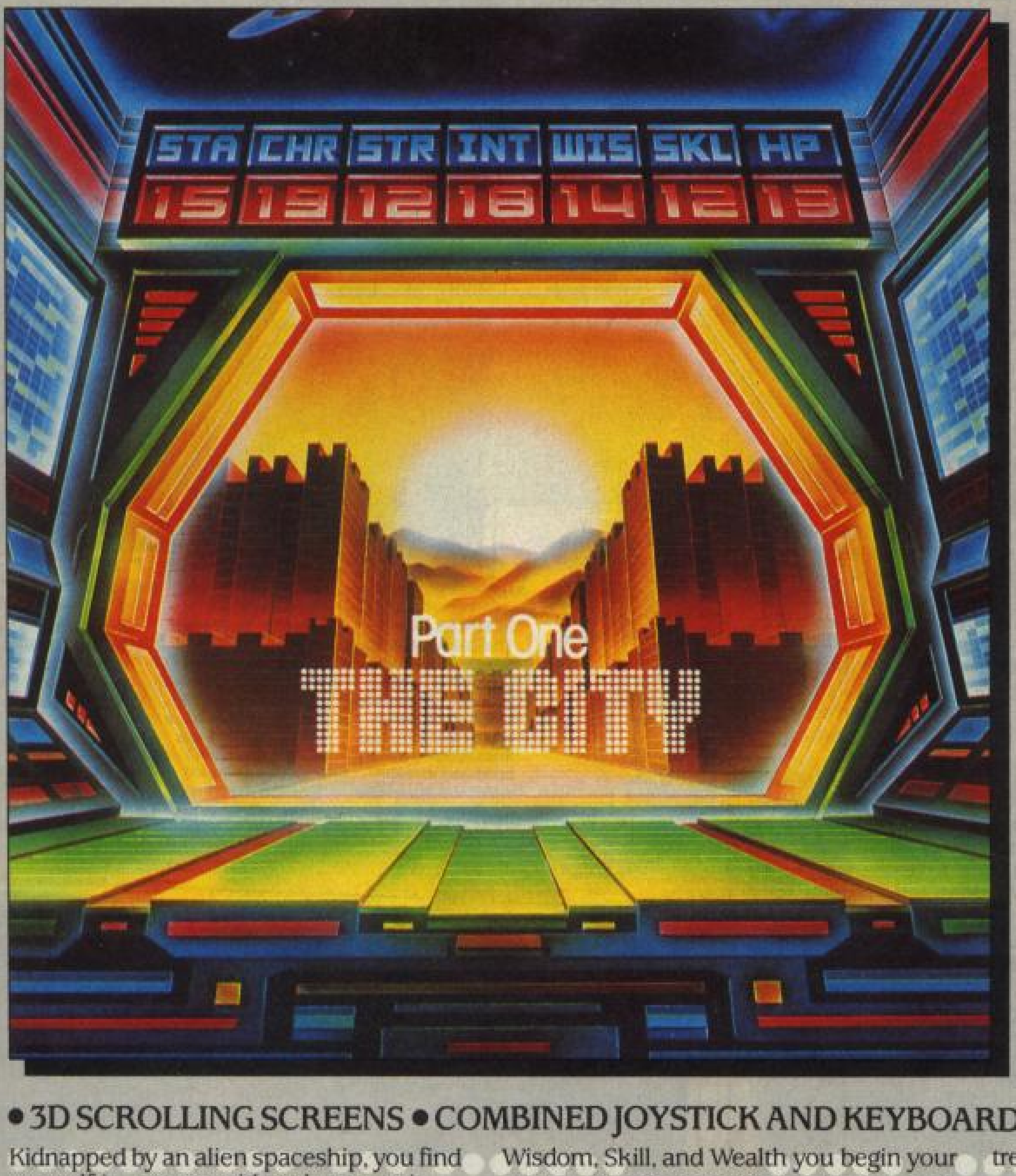
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Datasoft

THE STORY

Far out in the infinite void of space lies the barren and blasted planet Zoidstar. Centuries before it had been populated by the Zoidarians, an ancient race of galactic warlords. With the aid of their immensely powerful fighting machines, Blue Zoids, they conquered and destroyed planet after planet until their victory was absolute.

Now that all had been dominated the Zoids became redundant. The Zoidarian's thirst for war still wasn't slaked so androids were developed to control the Zoids and simulated battles were fought in huge arenas for the entertainment of the populace. The androids became ever more sophisticated until they eventually took over the design and production of the Zoids.

The Zoidarian dynasty continued for years, until one fateful day when the Zoidstar skies blazed during a particularly heavy meteor storm. Little did the Zoidarians know of the devastation this cosmic firework display was to bring, for the meteors brought with them a poison that no life could survive. Within a few days only the machines remained.

As Zoidar power supplies began to dwindle Zoid turned upon Zoid in a mechano-Darwinian struggle for the survival of the fittest. During this time a standby Zoid spaceforce had attempted to return to the planet but had been forced to land on Zoidstar's cold moon. The androids soon discovered that the Zoids couldn't survive the freezing conditions so they adapted them, and the boiling fluid Red Zoids were born.

The Red Zoids learned to cooperate with each other during their transformation period and became a unified fighting force . . . and returned to Zoidstar to defeat the Blue Zoids. Taken completely by surprise, the Blue Zoids were all but defeated. City after city fell to the Red army, led by the megalomaniac Red Horn the Terrible. The Blue Zoids fought bravely, but prepared themselves for extinction.

It was then that an insignificant little spaceship plunged into the affray. A Blue Zoid was first onto the scene, and it picked up a humanoid who was to be called the 'Earthman'. He soon learnt the art of Zoidthought, the means by which a pilot communicates with his Zoid and proved himself to be a fearless and cunning fighter.

He drew up a daring plan to strike a blow at the Reds from which they would never recover. The Blue Zoids pooled their resources and Zoidzilla, a Zoid who could take on the might of the Red army and survive, was developed. The Earthman was to merge minds with this apocalyptic machine and completely destroy all Red Zoid installations, but disaster struck. During transportation the ship was hit by a missile and Zoidzilla scattered across the Red Zoid terrain. The eight pieces were recovered and buried under the Red cities, and with the Earthman presumed dead the Red Zoids prepared to administer a final crushing onslaught . . .

SIZZLER

ZOIDS

Martech, £8.95 cass, joystick only



SENSORS When activated, this icon relays information gathered from the Zoid's external sensors, for example a missile launch against you.

RAILGUNS This is the Zoid's primary offensive system. The railguns propel high velocity metal projectiles at any targeted enemy, Zoids or installations. When activated two sets of windows open, one showing the target and the other the railgun targetting screen. Here you have control over a cursor and have to fight against enemy jamming and move it to the centre of the screen for your shots to be effective. The jamming makes the cursor difficult to control, and the stronger the enemy the trickier the cursor is to target.

INFORMATION This gives information about enemy or enemy installations. Upon activation windows open containing details about the selected object.

MISSILES The Zoid's secondary offensive consists of 25 missiles. These should only be used against the more powerful Zoids and installations. When accessed three windows open: one showing the target, one the missile and the other a load fuel/ignition window. Place the cursor over the load fuel screen to fuel up (the more fuel the longer the range) and then move over the ignition icon. The three windows are then replaced by another three, one showing the missile (which is irrelevant) and two guidance windows. Both guidance windows have to be used in conjunction to guide the missile to its target.

THE GAME

What the Red Zoids failed to see was a small Tankzoid scuttling away from the wreckage. In it, mind merged with the arachnid-like creature was the Earthman, **You**.

Controlling the Zoid is done via icons and a cursor. When an icon is accessed a window, or series of windows, emerges from the screen giving further information and icons. What the Earthman has to do is recover the eight pieces of Zoidzilla — a very demanding task.

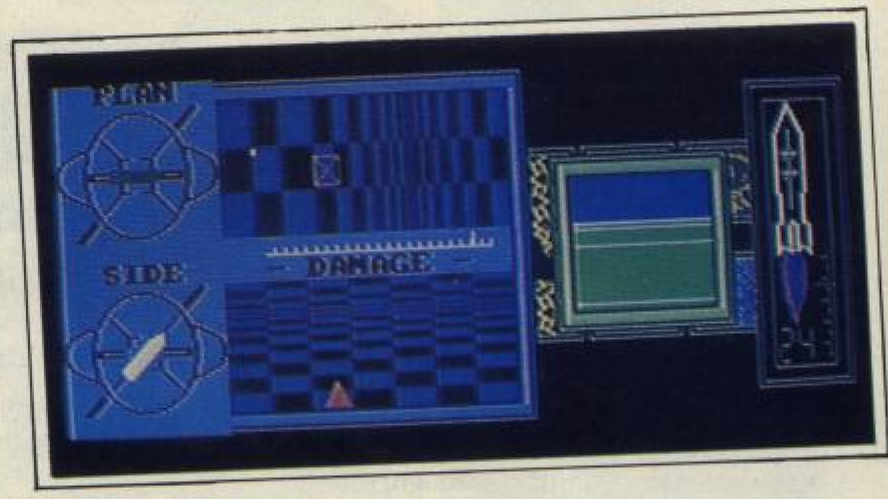
The Red Zoid environment, consists of eight city networks each with several city domes, a mine, radio transmitters and a power generator. Under one of the city domes in each network is a piece of Zoidzilla, but recovering requires forethought and a plan of action. All the networks are integrated; start attacking a city dome and the radio transmitter sends out an SOS signal to the other cities and the Red Zoids come running. The power generator supplies the energy to the city domes which can be converted to a defensive shield in times of crisis.

When a piece of Zoidzilla is recovered the Tankzoid's power capsules and armoury are replenished to their full and the Tankzoid is upgraded (starting at Slitherzoid rating the Earthman can progress through Scorpozoid, Trooperzoid, Great Gorgon and finally Zoidzilla).

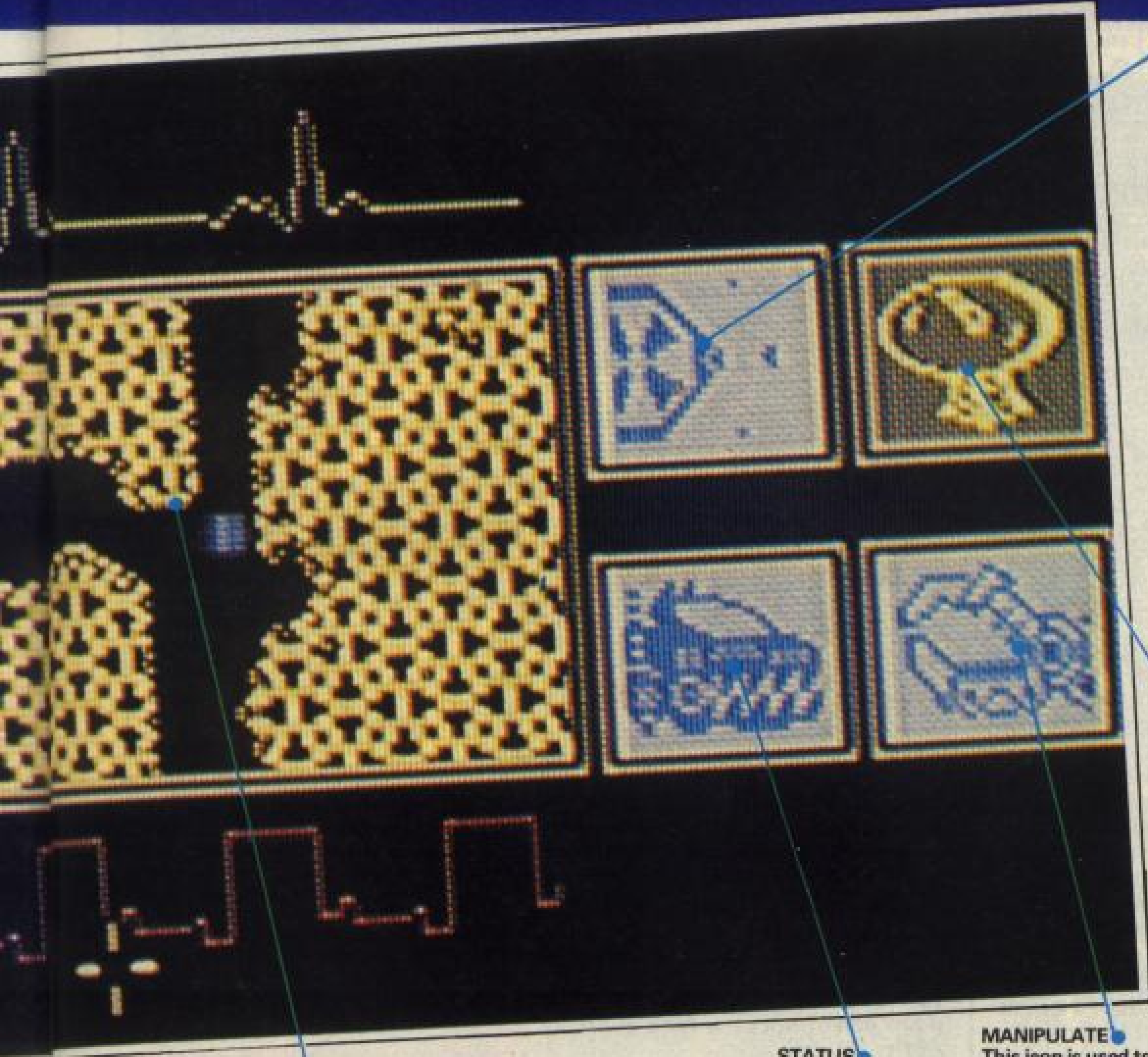


I must admit that I wasn't too impressed when I first saw this game. The scrolling on the central map screen is pretty wobbly using software scrolling.

On further playing I found that the initial doubts about Zoids were only cosmetic — behind the seemingly dull exterior is a very challenging game. I liked the control method, some of the icons and windows are excellently thought out, especially the missile sequence. Zoids is a very hard game, and not the sort where you can sit down and solve it in one go — a lot of practice is needed before a player can become competent enough to recover the first piece! I can strongly recommend Zoids, it's one of the best arcade adventure/strategy/arcade action games I've seen.



The main screen shows the plan and elevation trajectory of the missile. These are used to make fine adjustments to the course of the missile. The other, smaller screen, shows the view from the missile's camera, which is located in its head. This screen is used to guide the missile around natural obstacles like hills and mountains.



SHIELD
When this icon is accessed a window opens showing the current condition of your shield. Looking like a pie chart, it shows all eight vital functions (the icons in other words) and the strength of each of their shields. As the Zoid is attacked some of the shields begin to fail (it depends on what part of the Zoid the enemy is hitting). As time goes on the shields go through a series of colour changes, representative of how weak they are becoming. Using this icon the player can rotate the whole system so that the stronger shields can protect the more vital functions.

JAMMING
Things like Zoids, radio stations and cities all give off radio waves. This icon can be used to isolate those types of objects (or Zoids) by jamming their radio emissions. When this function is activated a window opens showing the radio signal being transmitted, and your jamming signal underneath. What the player has to do is tune his signal to match the enemy's, by using three fine tuners. If the signal is matched then it's cancelled out and successfully jammed.

THE MAP SCREEN
Shows the position of your Zoid, landscape features, cities, radio beacons etc within map range. The scanner also shows any Zoids within the locality — useful so you can see how busy the road ahead is. If you move the cursor over the map screen and press fire a small window emerges showing you any objects and Zoids within range. Moving the cursor over one of these results a series of windows opening to identify the object. You can then decide whether to attack it or not. This screen is also used to set the Zoid in motion. Press the fire button twice and a roadmap is overlayed on the screen. You can then select the direction you want your Zoid to travel in by moving the joystick. The Zoid now trundles along the road until you tell it to do otherwise.

STATUS
When you activate this the player is given information about the Zoid's current status.

MANIPULATE
This icon is used to pick up and drop objects. Mines, for example, can be dropped by accessing this icon and extra fuel pods, or pieces of Zoidzilla picked up.



After playing the excellent Amstrad and Spectrum versions of Zoids I really looked forward to having a bash at the Commodore version, and I wasn't disappointed — it's the best of the lot! Controlling the game is done via an excellent icon and windowing system which is all accessed through the joystick. The sheer depth of the game is amazing; a complete Zoids environment with city network infrastructures and renegade battleforces have all been crammed into the 64 — fabulous. The soundtrack is very good indeed and lends an excellent atmosphere to the game. If you're looking for a game which will keep you occupied over the next few months then look no further than Zoids.



To be honest I thought Zoids was going to be incredibly boring. A few games later I realised I couldn't have been further from the truth — Zoids is amazing! I became thoroughly engrossed virtually from the word 'GO' and have found it difficult to pull myself away from this classic creation. The Electronic Pencil Company have excellled themselves and come up with something that even surpasses their previous product, The Fourth Protocol. *Although Zoids doesn't look particularly impressive on screen, it is very user friendly and contains enough variety and depth to keep many a gamesplayer content for months to come.*



In the open window all eight icons are shown. The circle around them represents the current status of the shield, which isn't too bad at the present time. Don't forget, the whole system can be rotated so the more vital functions are protected.

Presentation 98%
Very comprehensive instructions and brilliant on-screen presentation.

Graphics 87%
Excellent windowing system, well thought out icons, but the central map screen scrolls wobbily.

Sound 91%
An atmospheric Rob Hubbard piece which suits the game perfectly.

Hookability 90%
Because it's so tough it's very tough to get anywhere without a lot of practice.

Lastability 98%
Once you get going, though, the Zoid conquest becomes highly involved.

Value For Money 96%
Merging with a Zoid works out cheaper than buying a placcy one.

Overall 96%
A very challenging and excellent arcade adventure/strategy/ shoot em up.



ZZAP! TEST

LAW OF THE WEST

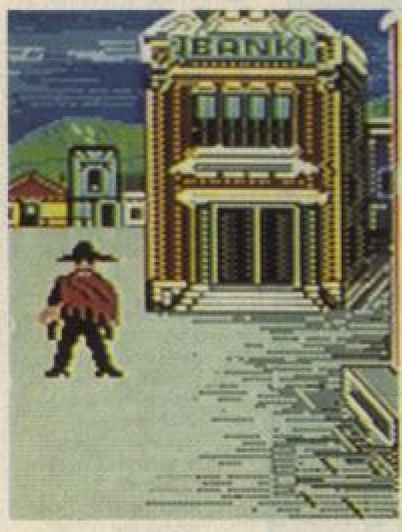
US Gold/Accolade, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

Life in the good ol' Wild West sure was tough, what with all them bank robberies and shoot-outs, and evil Hombres running about the place causing havoc. Accolade's *Law of the West* gives you the opportunity of finding out just how wild the West really was. As Sheriff of Gold Gulch, a small but by no means peaceful town, it is your duty to protect the innocent, quell the very naughty and generally keep law and order until sundown.

There are eleven different situations to put your integrity and efficiency as a lawman to the test and each takes the form of a brief encounter with a particular character. Your problems start outside the saloon with the appearance of a burly gunslinger who strolls casually out onto the street and asks: 'You the Sheriff of this stinkin' town?' to which you can offer one of four replies, shown at the bottom of the screen, ranging from pleasant and sycophantic to authoritative and aggressive. The choice of reply affects the mood of the character in question and it is best not to cross the nastier types, for you may find yourself eating a main course of lead with dirt for desert.

However, you are provided with a suitable weapon — a powerful six shooter is at your disposal, should you wish to use it, along with a seemingly infinite supply of ammunition. Useful for preventing the occasional bank raid or stage coach robbery. If you do resort to gunplay though, it is wise to have the Doctor on your side as he can turn an inconvenient flesh wound into a terminal case of death with a quick sip of the bottle and slip of the scalpel. Other townsfolk include the iniquitous Miss Rose, the 'hostess' with the mostest who works behind the bar in the local saloon, and the Mexicali Kid, who's very keen to shoot up the local Sheriff if given the chance. Oh, there's also little Willy, a boy with a secret that he won't tell unless suitably persuaded.

When your stint as Sheriff finally comes to an end, through either loss of life or daylight hours, a full evaluation of your prowess is given, detailing how well you maintained your authority and fared romantically amongst other things. You are also told your overall score.





Law of the West is initially very impressive due to the stunning graphics (although there are only four different backdrops) and an excellent atmosphere. Unfortunately it soon proves a chore to play as the responses become predictable and then there is little action to compensate. I think that Law of the West has over-priced itself really, and that at a much lower tag it would have been well worth spending the money on for its novel feel and amusing ideas.



Beneath the very pretty and instantly appealing graphic exterior of Law of the West there lies little in the way of lasting challenge. Though some pleasure was derived from the first few plays, I soon became bored due the limited and repetitive nature of the game. It's a nice idea that has been well executed, but unfortunately it doesn't hold anything other than short term interest with effectively so little to do. There is an excellent atmosphere generated when playing the disk version, but this is lost using cassette as it takes time to load individual scenes. Law of the West is essentially a good game, but only for a short while.



'Absolutely brilliant' was my first reaction to this game, but after playing it a few times my initial enthusiasm was dampened somewhat. The trouble is that there are only eleven scenes and once you've been through them a couple of times they all become dull and highly predictable. The shooting bits are quite fun, but again, once sussed the player can win every time. The sound and graphics are all quite jolly, but it's not really a game I could recommend, especially the s-l-o-w cassette version.

Confronted by a drunken doctor, our hero (pictured far left) attempts to justify the recent spate of killings.



Presentation 76%
Some pleasant touches but generally nothing outstanding.

Graphics 85%
Four superlative backdrops and some well defined sprites, but little else.

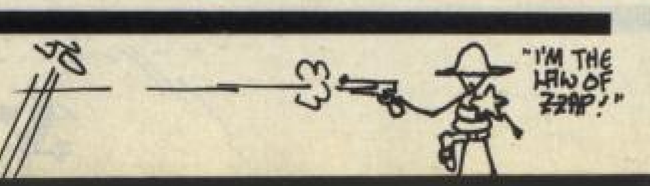
Sound 79%
A variety of jolly tunes and a few sufficient FX.

Hookability 90%
Initially very absorbing to play, although loading from cassette does ruin the excellent atmosphere generated.

Lastability 71%
Despite a large range of responses and the challenge of improving upon your score, the game soon proves boring to play as the situations get sussed.

Value For Money 72%
It has instant visual appeal, but the lack of depth makes it a bit over the top in price.

Overall 78%
A highly atmospheric and initially enjoyable game with exceptional graphics, but lacking in sufficient variety and true depth to enthral for any great length of time.



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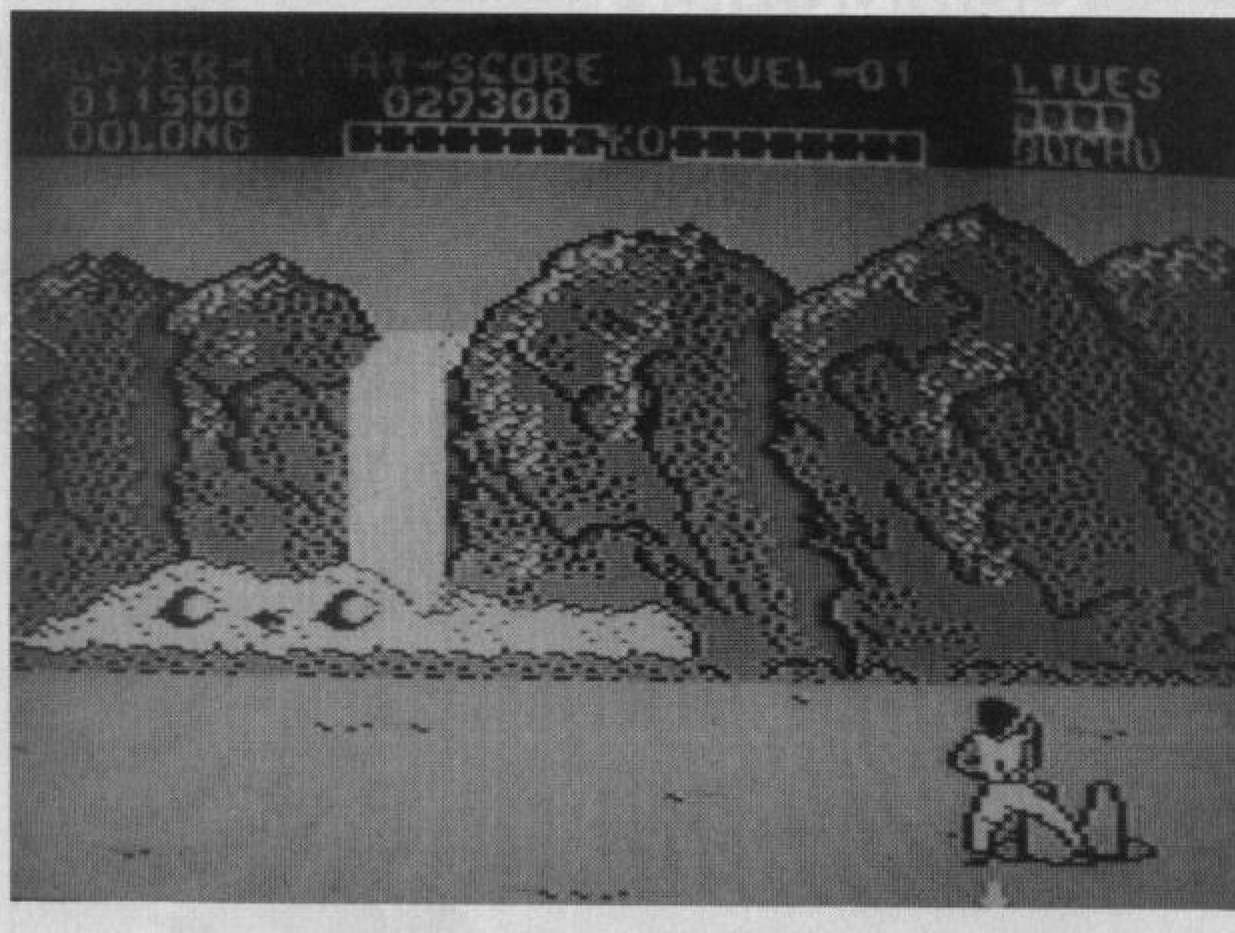
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YIE AR KUNG-FU

Imagine, £8.95 cass, joystick only



After many months of delay Imagine's conversion of the Konami arcade game *Yie Ar Kung Fu* finally makes it to the Commodore. All the features of the original are included, with the same ten opponents, control method and backdrops.

Like most arcade games, the scenario is a very simple one.



This has all of the features of the arcade game, but unfortunately it doesn't play as well as the original. The graphics aren't particularly brilliant and only just capture the atmosphere of its arcade counterpart. In terms of playability Yie Ar *suffers, sometimes Oolong seems to have a mind of his own and doesn't perform the move you want him to. It's certainly a difficult and challenging version, and becoming a kung fu master will take some doing. If you like the sound of this game, or liked the arcade version then it's worth taking a look at.*

Taking the role of Oolong the kung fu fighter, you have to salvage the honour of your family by becoming a master of the martial arts. This is achieved by taking on and bettering ten vicious opponents, who are all rather weird and range from a petite, but very violent fan-throwing female to a chain-wielding jellified fatty.

Oolong, being rather good at the kung fu bit, has 16 special moves to confound, confuse and generally damage his opponents. These are all accessible via combinations of joystick directions and the fire button, a similar method to that used on *Way of the Exploding Fist*. Some of the moves like roundhouse, flying kick and leg sweep will be pretty familiar to kung fu fans, but others such as the flying punch, stride punch and ground kick open new grounds in fighting tactics. For every kick or punch on target points are awarded, 500 points for the most simple moves up to 2,000 points for a well executed flying kick. Every 20,000 points a new life is awarded.



When a round starts each fighter is given a certain amount of energy, shown on-screen as a bar. When you get hit an eighth of your energy is lost. After the eighth hit poor old Oolong loses one of his five lives and has to face the same opponent again. The opponents' energy bars work in the same way and if you manage to hit them eight times then Oolong is declared the winner, his energy level is restored and he goes on to fight the next, more vicious opponent.



I expected the 64 conversion of the superb arcade original to be better than the rest, but it's not — the Amstrad version is superior without a doubt. Admittedly, comparisons shouldn't be made, but Yie Ar Kung-Fu *on the 64 is not a good game to play. I didn't enjoy it at all. Graphically, it isn't too hot either. The sprites look small and puny and I don't like the way they 'slide' across the screen. However, the backdrops are quite pleasant. Mr Galway's soundtrack is neat, although not outstanding and the sound effects are very nice.* Yie Ar Kung Fu *could quite easily have been the best of the genre, but unfortunately it isn't. Basically, disappointing.*



Yie Ar Kung Fu *is yet another conformist safe money spinner designed to cash in on the latest fad for the beat em up. And it's just as dull as all the others. As games of this type go I suppose it's all right, it offers new challenge for all those into pixel violence. The graphics are of an average sort though the sprites seem to float about as opposed to realistically moving. Sonically it's all very competent as well, though it really is a bit naughty to take a chunk out of Jarre's 'Magnetic Fields' for the title screen music. Do Rocksoft know? I don't like this game though I'm sure most* Fist *devotees will love it.*

Each of the ten combatants has an individual fighting style and different fighting strategies are needed in order to win. On later levels the opponents carry weapons — swords, chains, clubs, fans, sticks and throwing stars which have to be avoided, either by jumping or ducking. All this while trying to beat off the usual melee of kicks and punches thrown at you!

The final opponent is a real toughie — he's your clone, only faster and stronger than you! If you manage to bash him in then Oolong finally becomes a kung fu master and his family's honour is restored once more. Then he has to challenge the same ten opponents, only this time they're meaner and faster.

Presentation 86%
Informative instructions, two player option and generally attractive appearance.

Graphics 64%
Just adequate sprites, but decent backdrops.

Sound 84%
Superb title screen music and pleasant in-game tune.

Hookability 72%
It's a hard game that could lead to frustration.

Lastability 70%
But if you like this sort of thing you'll stick at it.

Value For Money 65%
Cheaper than the average game, but no better.

Overall 68%
Have a couple of games before deciding to buy.

"TIME TO STOP ALL THIS KICKING AND CHOPPING."



COMIC BAKERY

Imagine, £8.95 cass, joystick only

Latest in the saga of Imagine's acquisition of 64 conversion rights to Konami arcade games is the release of *Comic Bakery*. The scenario, as with a most Japanese originated ones, is a bit strange. Joe the baker has to bake as many loaves as possible and get them to the baker's shop before the five o'clock van leaves. What's so strange about that you ask? Well, for some totally unaccounted and probably *strange* reason racoons have broken into old Joe's bakery and have taken it into their heads to disrupt, disturb and generally hassle the old man. Obviously not an animal lover by any degree, Joe has equipped himself with a stun gun to cope with the pesky *Procyon lotor*. Any racoons passing Joe's path get a stun blast and are kicked of the screen before they get a chance to reawaken.

The main trouble caused by the racoon invasion is their predeliction to interfere with the automatic baking machines of which there are three. In the normal course of operation loaves are churned out from the first machine and progress along a conveyor belt towards the awaiting van. Two other machines are placed along the conveyor that perform baker-like operations on the travelling bread. The racoons' favourite pastime is turning off the bread processing machinery, causing it to pile up.

Another annoying habit of one particular animal running up and down a gantry above the bread carrying belt is leaning over and swiping the odd prebaked loaf. Come five o'clock and the baker van leaves, carrying any loaves that may have got through, distributing them to the shop to feed any fasting customers. Each tasty snack delivered gains handy bonus points.

The screen is split midway to display the strange goings on in Joe's place. Joe constantly sits in the middle of the lower screen which shows the background around him. Moving left and right causes the bakery to scroll around the corpulent baker. Fat though the sprite undeniably is, there's still life left in the porky old bloke since pushing upwards sends Joe skyward in a surprisingly athletic jump. This is most handy for leaping errant racoons, the touch of which is deadly to fat bakers. Another defence against racoons is the stun gun. This is not an infinite weapon and too much zapping depletes its charge, indicated at the top of the screen. After a brief pause the charge builds up again.

Racoons trot on from the left or right of the screen and a quick stun from your gun knocks them senseless to the floor. Walking into a racoon in it's defenceless state sends it careening from your foot and off the screen. The kleptomaniac animal that steals the bread can also be zapped with a stun ray but there's no way of knocking it off screen.

Above the main action a scanner is provides that also includes a clock counting towards five in the afternoon. The scanner shows the whole length of the bakery with the awaiting van at the far end. Racoons aren't detailed on the scanner though their positions are fairly constant. Throughout there's the now ubiquitous Martin Galway music. There's even the *Hypersports* music on the loader, though it's been slowed down into a reggae version.



After hearing the excellent music and seeing the jolly graphics I thought that the game was going to be a really good one. Unfortunately it's bo-o-o-oring, with screen after screen of the same action. It never seems to get much harder either and with extra lives coming thick and fast it's possible to go on for ages before the game ends — dullsville! Oh well, good graphics and sound maketh not a game as the ancient chinese proverb goes . . .



Despite the very pretty graphics and nice sound, Imagine *have been stuck with an awful game all along and there can't have been much they could do to change it.* Comic Bakery *is so dull. The main reason for its yawn appeal is that it's so easy. I'm no mega gamester but progressing up through the screens is not a task I'd place on my top ten hard things to do list. It's a real shame since the people involved do seem to be talented — to make them produce boring tat like* Comic Bakery *is really a sin. A little tiring is the now 'essential' Martin Galway, his work is getting as boring as Hubbard's, not because of the musical content but just because of the 'instruments' he uses. I find it hard to say anything good about* Comic Bakery *except the programmers have made the best of a bad job.*



Comic Bakery *looks and sounds delightful, but that's about it. Colour is used to good effect, the sprites are appealing and the Martin Galway soundtrack works well, but unfortunately a game is lacking to complement these features.* Comic Bakery *is one of the most boring games I have ever played. Purchase at leisure and repent with haste.*

Presentation 88%
Very jolly attempt that manages to appeal.

Graphics 89%
Lovely racoon sprites coupled with some very nice Art Deco looking machinery.

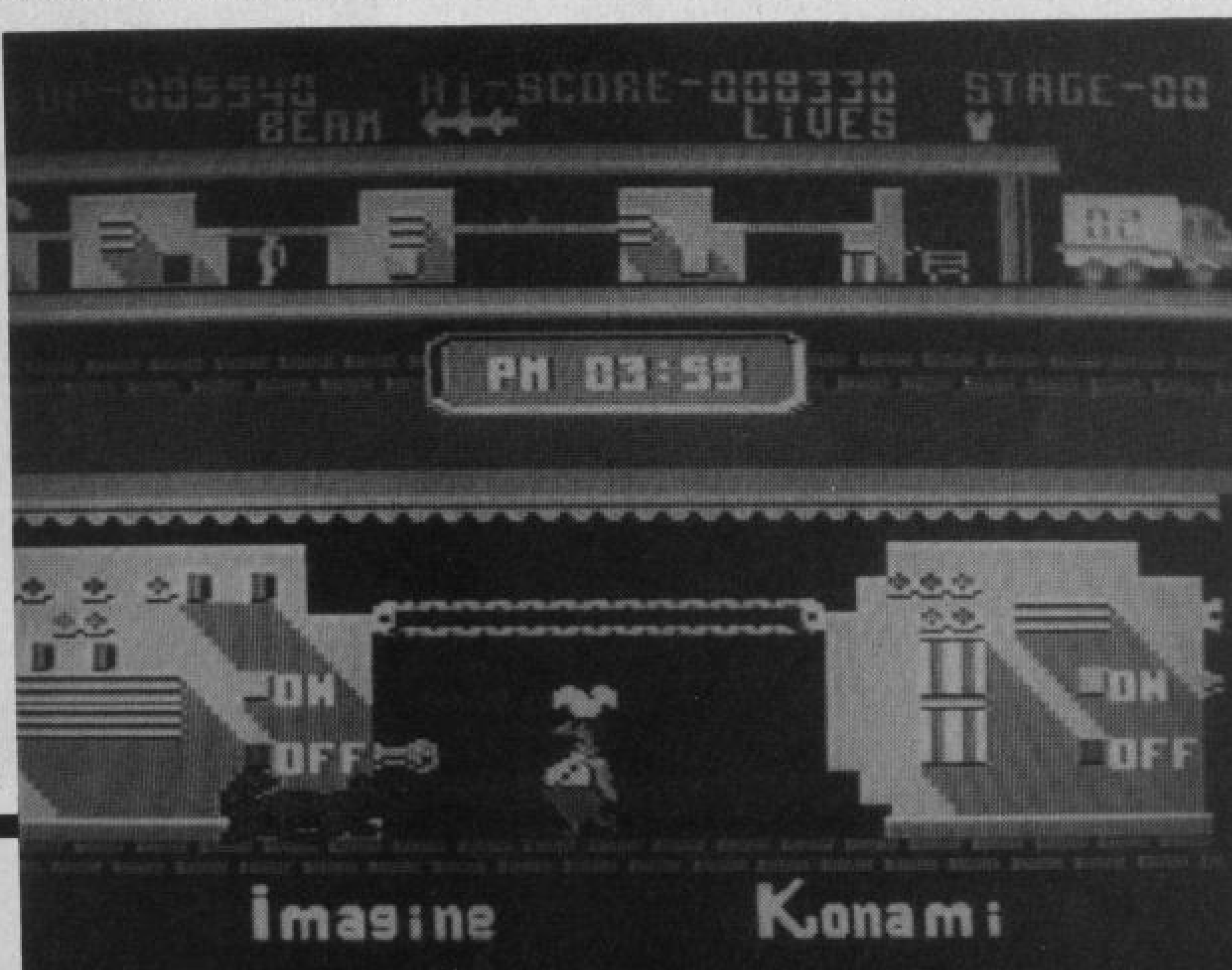
Sound 91%
Typically cool Martin Galway music and effects.

Hookability 39%
This is where things get bad. Comic Bakery is instantly boring which means . . .

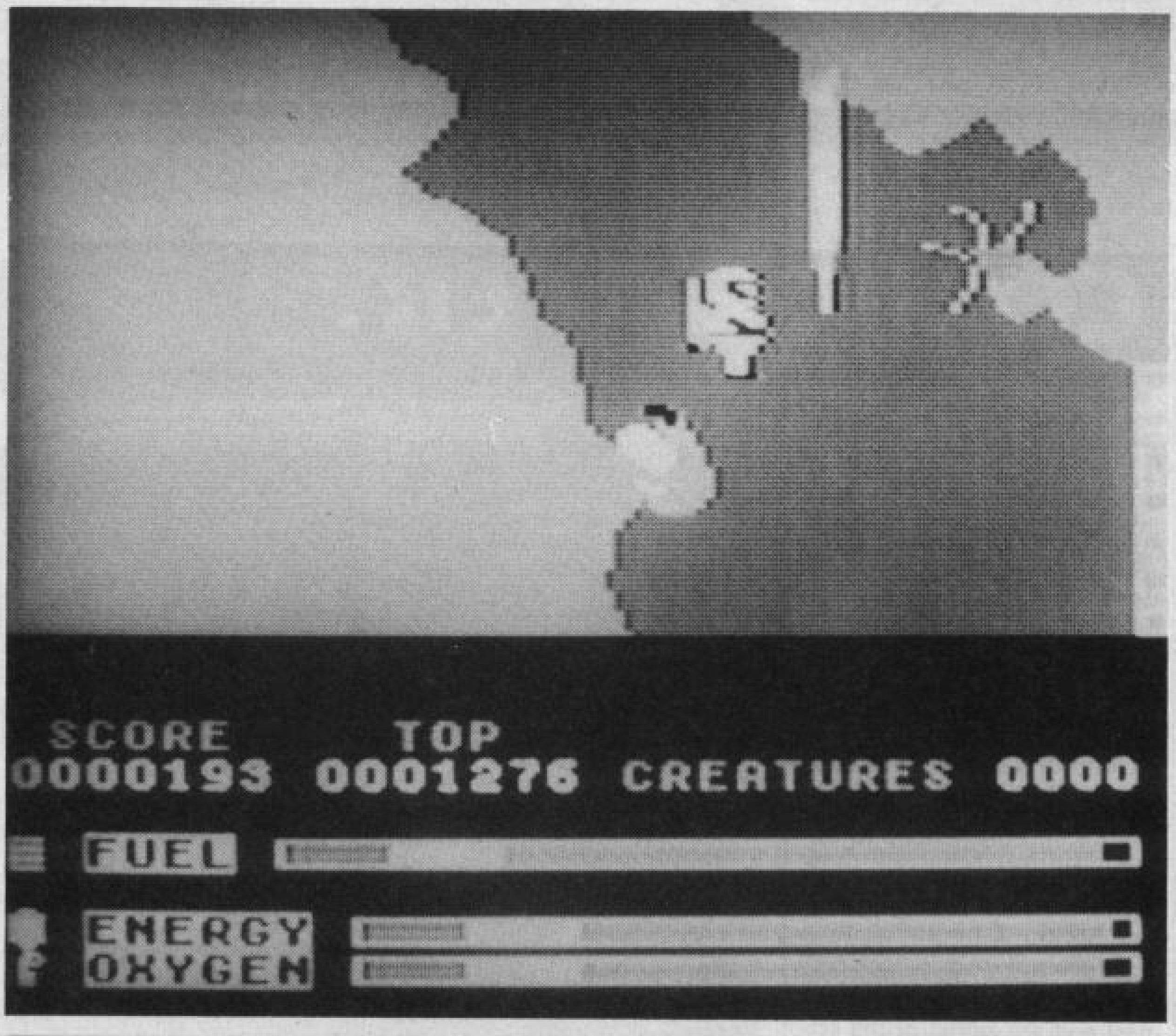
Lastability 30%
. . . play it once and you won't want to again.

Value For Money 31%
With gameplay like this it should be budget. The price asked is near ludicrous.

Overall 35%
Just not worth anyone's money or time, especially Imagine's.



ZZAP! TEST



The *Phantoms of the Asteroid* are not the nicest of chaps if you take trying to kill people as not nice. If you're particularly callous you'd probably think 'It doesn't matter that much. I mean, it's not *me* they're trying to kill'. Think again because it is. The asteroid on which the phantoms live is inconveniently on a collision course with old Mother Earth. Obviously everyone's a bit panicky since it's a jolly big asteroid, one that would cause a little bit more than a slight dent if it hit our bluey-green world. Not only that but the phantoms also want to take over the planet. Not too nice really.

Well you're a hero and it's your job to blow the approaching megalith to smithereens. Since it's such a large asteroid a nuclear bomb of gargantuan size is required. Luckily advance scanners from Earth have detected the existence of 36 uranium cubes on the asteroid, just enough to make meteor dust out of it. All you have to do is collect all three dozen cubes, combine

PHANTOMS OF THE ASTEROID

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass, joystick only

"DO THEY LIKE OPERA?"

them so they achieve critical mass, and then rather rapidly depart to avoid getting mashed along with the floating rock mountain. All very easy, if it wasn't for the force walls, poisonous plants, energy draining phantoms, ever draining oxygen and your fuel hungry jet pack. Ho hum, well this sort of thing isn't supposed to be easy.

The equipment supplied consists of the bog standard power pack, a handy device that propels anything strapped to it skyward. The power supply, however, runs out very quickly, luckily there are fuel outlets at a number of points around the asteroid for replenishing it. Similarly, your oxygen supply runs



This is all very reminiscent of Rocket Roger, *but just not as good really. The main bugbear I have is its slowness in play. If the game was just a touch faster and a little bit more responsive, I'm sure it would be great fun. The map over which you scroll is absolutely huge and will cause quite a few problems to those into mapping games. I don't like* Phantoms *though I'm sure quite a few arcade adventurers will. Still it may be worth checking out for Mastertronic's meager £1.99 price tag.*

out fast, so it's nice to know that there are also oxygen points for topping up. Another handy piece of standard equipment is the gun. This fires in the direction being faced and any phantoms in your way gets splatted into phantom ghoulash. Regrettably others appear to take the ex-phantom's place.

With bulging eyes and gorm-



I found Phantoms of the Asteroid *a very enjoyable game to play, despite its emptiness and slow speed. While not being graphically outstanding, it is sufficient and the music and sound effects are very good indeed — especially the title screen tune, which I feel is Rob Hubbard's best yet. If* Phantoms of the Asteroid *had a bit more to it and was slightly faster it would be really neat, but even so as it stands it's very good value for money.*

less expressions, the only real harm the phantoms can do to you is bump your body. This depreciates the energy supply shown as a histogram on screen. Also histogramically represented is the fuel and oxygen supply, let any of these hit rock bottom and the game's over. Another way of dying is to go full splat into the constantly toggling force shields. To open them you just stand on their control pads and they deactivate for a limited amount of time. You have to hurry since there's nothing worse than having a force wall reactivate through the middle of your body.

The game is represented on a scanner in which your character remains centrally positioned while the background scrolls as he moves. Up activates the jets in the power pack and lets a hefty flame belch from behind you. To go down just leave the jets off and gravity drifts you floorwards. Asteroidal phantoms home in on you constantly flying through rocks to reach your location if necessary.



Although being very similar to Rocket Roger, Phantoms *has plenty to offer any budding cartographer or explorer. The asteroid's cave system is absolutely huge and there are loads of nasties just dying to get their teeth into the hero of the game. The graphics and sound within the game are rather simplistic, but the sound on the title screen is really good with a good ol' Hubbard funky bop thundering away. At £1.99 the game is a steal and should definitely be looked up.*

Because of the enormity of your task Mastertronic have thoughtfully provided load and save options to save your current position out to tape — saving Mother Earth ain't so simple.

Presentation 79%
Handy on screen instructions plus the inclusion of a save and load option brings this above average mark.

Graphics 60%
Pleasant, but somewhat aged in style. Nice scrolling though.

Sound 91%
Another rip-roaring Rob Hubbard soundtrack.

Hookability 65%
The game plays a little bit too slow to give any real instant appeal.

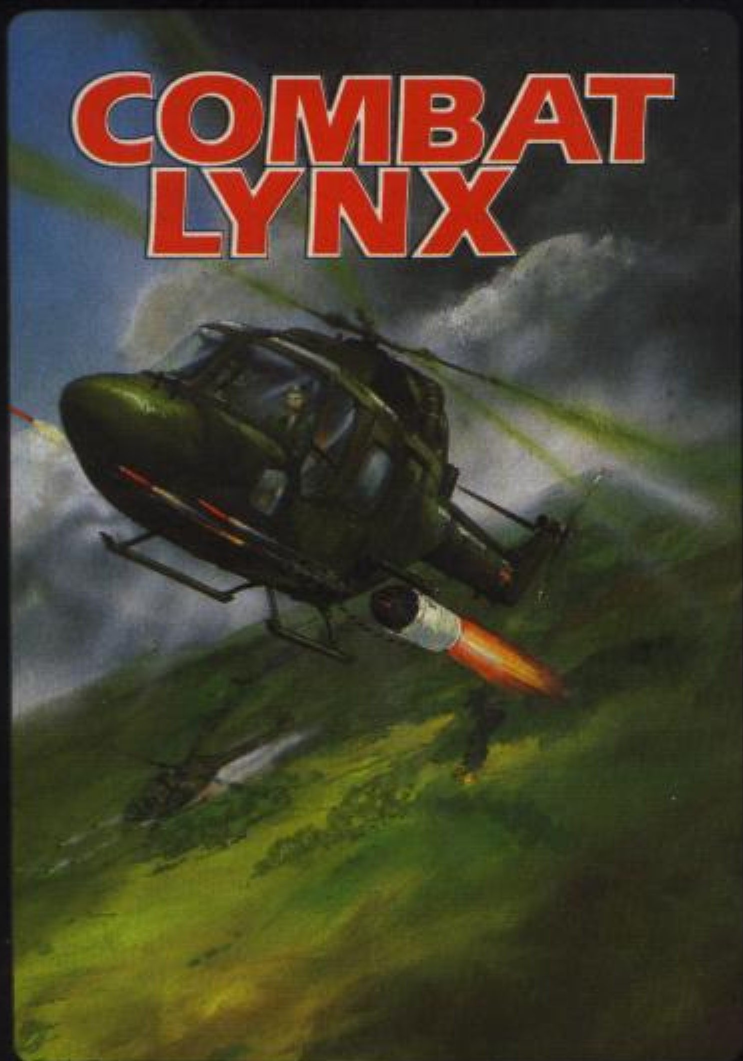
Lastability 62%
And the slowness continues to irk throughout.

Value For Money 78%
Still not bad for ½1.99.

Overall 73%
Arcade adventure fanatics will be likely to hook onto this one but any appeal to other gamesters will probably be limited.


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DURELL

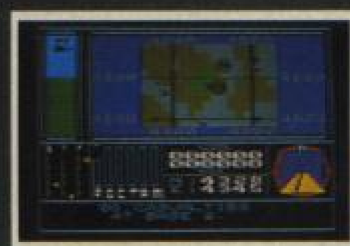


COMBAT LYNX (Air-to-ground Battle Simulation)

Spectrum 48k	£8.95
Commodore 64	£8.95
Amstrad 464/6128	£8.95
BBC/Electron	£8.95

"Combat Lynx is both simulation and shoot-em-up games in one. The 3D effect created by using contour line graphics tends to give it a more technical feel, so more like a simulation, but on the other hand there are lots of jets and enemy helicopters whizzing around and ground forces shooting at you which gives the game its instant playability appeal. Once you get the hang of coping with everything, it's possible to play a game of high strategy which involves not only arcade skills but those of forward planning. For people who enjoy strategy type games, Combat Lynx should provide hours of fun, while for those who prefer something instant and fast - choose skill level 4 and hang onto your hats! Generally the graphics are most impressive, with a few attribute problems when objects are about to become hidden, but these are minor in what is otherwise an engaging and challenging game."







TURBO ESPRIT (3D Simulation Car Chase)

Spectrum 48k	£8.95
Commodore 64	£8.95
Amstrad 464/6128	£8.95

You are a special agent equipped with a Lotus Turbo Esprit. An international ring of drug smugglers are about to make a huge delivery of heroin, and must be stopped at all costs. The drugs are stored at a number of houses in the city, and will be taken by cars to an armoured van which will be cruising around the centre. A raid on the van before completion of the delivery would leave some of the drugs in circulation. Similarly a raid on any of the houses would alert them to your squad's activities. You must therefore try and pick-off the cars one by one before they make their drop, and then try to stop the van before it escapes. The delivery cars will be backed-up by 'hit' squads - so watch out!

(Developed with the support of Lotus Cars Ltd)







CRITICAL MASS (Arcade)

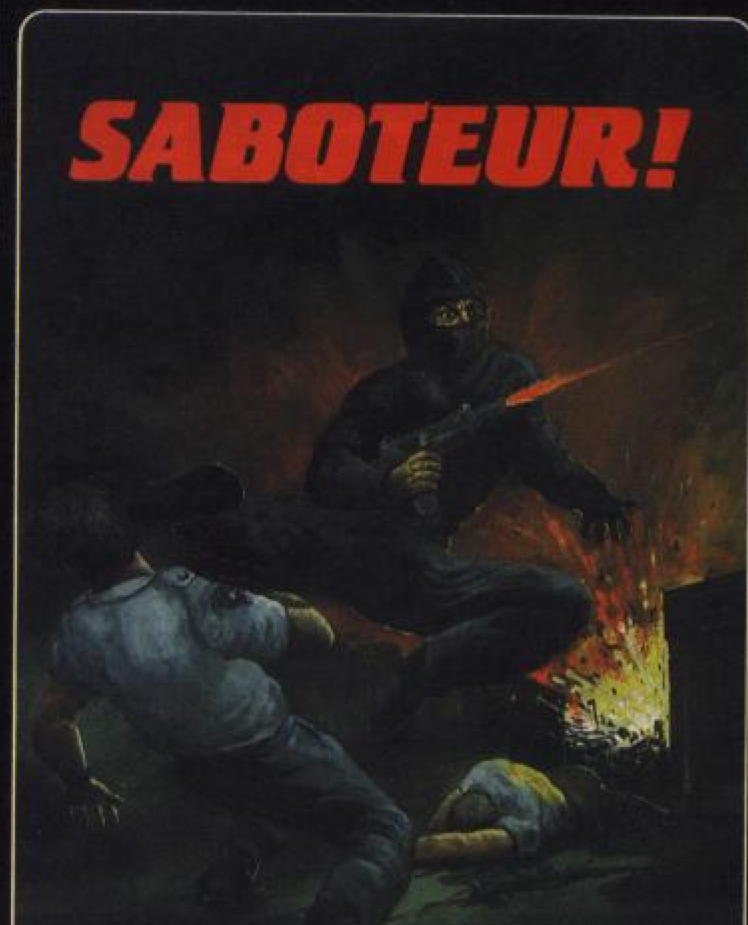
Spectrum 48k £8.95
Commodore 64 £8.95
Amstrad 464/6128 £8.95

An outlying system of the Terra Federation has set up an advanced anti-matter conversion plant on a centrally positioned asteroid to supply the local colonists with energy. A surprise attack by alien forces has successfully overcome the asteroid's defences and the aliens are now threatening to self-destruct the power plant unless the colonists offer an unconditional surrender. The self-destruction process would effectively turn the power plant into a massive black hole that would wipe out the entire planetary system along with a number of nearby stars. Unconditional surrender offers an equally horrific prospect. Your mission is to infiltrate the enemy position and disable the anti-matter plant before the aliens achieve CRITICAL MASS.

"This is the biz!......The graphics and playability of this game are superb, making it well worth the money."







SABOTEUR (Martial Arts Arcade Adventure)

Spectrum 48k £8.95
Amstrad 464/6128 £8.95
Commodore 64 £8.95

You are a highly skilled mercenary trained in the martial arts. You are employed to infiltrate a central security building which is disguised as a warehouse. You must steal a disk that contains the names of all the rebel leaders before its information is sent to the outlying security stations. You are working against the clock, both in getting to the disk, and in making your escape. You must enter the building from the sea by rubber dinghy, and will then only be able to leave by the helicopter on the roof. You will have to find your way around the warehouse, making use of the guards' own weapon supplies in your struggle through overwhelming odds.

"Saboteur is without a doubt one of the best arcade games I've seen for a long time and a welcome departure from the plethora of licenced/endorsed product that the industry seems to currently favour. Recommended."





DURELL sales dept.,
Castle Lodge, Castle Green, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4AB, England
Telephone (0823) 54489 & 54029

software getting harder . . . .



GERRY THE GERM

Firebird, £7.95 cass, joystick or keys

Have you ever been ill and wondered what exactly was going wrong with your poor little body? Sitting there sweating, head throbbing, stomach making horrible gurgly noises and all that sort of thing. Now the inner workings of your body can be revealed by playing *Gerry the Germ*.

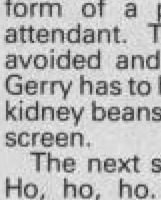
You see, Gerry has been thrown out of the Illstitute of Infectology for failing to get his stinkploma . . . out on the street, no money, a bacteria and a colony of viruses to support. Most ordinary germs would be defeated by this crushing blow, but not Gerry. He's a fighter, a rebel, a rapscallion and he's going to show the world that he's the best by taking on, and completely infecting a human being single handed.

You play the part of that heroic, teensy-weensy little germ, and have to successfully infect six parts of your host's body. There are six tasks, each forming six separate screens, and failing one results in him being put back to the first screen.

Gerry starts his quest in his unsuspecting host's lungs (after he's been inhaled). In the middle of the lungs are four square-dancing red blood corpuscles. Every time they cross a bottle of oxygen is produced which Gerry has to collect, until the lungs become diseased. Once that has been done he can whizz down a handy vein to the kidneys.

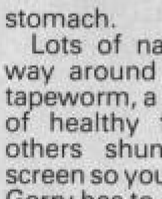
Here, Gerry has to eat as many kidney beans as it takes to make a reaction in his bacterial botty . . . and he can then go to the toilet and ruin the poor man's bowels. Naturally his task isn't an easy one and there are antibodies floating about the screen in the form of a plunger and toilet attendant. These have to be avoided and at the same time Gerry has to hack about after the kidney beans before they run off screen.

The next stop is the bladder. Ho, ho, ho. Gerry has luckily picked up a little rowing boat and is paddling around the pilake of strong liquid. Swimming about in the lake is a bull (!) which can overturn the boat . . . But luckily Gerry can pick up highly dangerous tactile nuclear toilet rolls to throw at it. If one hits home then the bull sinks for a while before continuing its chase. Gerry has to survive long enough for the bladder to pack in, and then it's on to the stomach.



Although Gerry the Germ *contains some amusing touches, it is, as a whole, not much fun. All six screens are frustrating to play and have little variety, which means any initial interest quickly wanes. Graphically it is quite pleasant and the tunes are jolly, but they do tend to irritate after a few games.* Gerry the Germ *is too expensive for what it is and I even doubt its credibility at a budget price.*

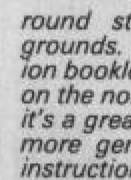
Lots of nasties trundle their way around the stomach — a tapeworm, a gas pocket and lots of healthy food. Some stun, others shunt you about the screen so you have to watch out! Gerry has to dissolve Mr Asprin, guardian of the exit, (he stops the stomach from going wrong) by dissolving him with the acid bottle found wandering around the screen. If Mr Asprin is dissolved then the stomach gets all acidic and the host suffers horribly, har, har.



The humour in this game, although being lavatorial, is quite enjoyable. Playing it though, is another kettle of fish entirely. Most of the screens involve chasing an object around whilst trying to dodge others, which soon becomes a real bore. Finishing a screen, having a couple of seconds on the next, failing and having to return to the previous one again was another niggling point — I'm sure it would have been much better to have lives. It's surprising that Firebird are asking £7.95 for this program, at £1.99 it would have just about seemed passable.

The next stop is the pancreas, which looks rather like the inside of a train carriage (pancreas sounds like St Pancras — joke). The screen is split in half, one half the inside of the carriage and the other the driver's compartment, with the fireman and driver. In the carriage are medical supplies should be dealt with. If Gerry touches them then they're infected, but he has to watch out for mean white cells whose touch spells trouble. Once the medical supplies have been ruined Gerry must stop the train, done by climbing unseen into the driver's compartment and lobbing coal at the driver. The driver thinks it's the fireman and a fight ensues . . .

Gerry's final job is to stop the heart. The objective of this screen is to reach the heart, made difficult by the amount of antibodies zooming around the screen. If Gerry finally manages to infect the heart then he wins, and proves to the rest of the germ world really he's a jolly clever fellow really.



It's quite hard to decide anything really definite on this one. I mean, it's a bit strange. The graphics are strange for a start, Gerry looking very germlike plods a round strange looking backgrounds. Strange. The instruction booklet doesn't exactly walk on the normal side of life either, it's a great big wall chart giving more gentle hints than actual instructions. Double strange. What I do know about Gerry the Germ is that it's a bitch to play. Easy it isn't. Getting past the lungaroo (the first sheet) is way beyond the meagre talents of myself and the rest of the reviewing team. In the end you are buying a game for just that, the game and Gerry the Germ *is so hard that there really isn't one in there. Shame, because some of the humour is quite nice.*

Presentation 66%
Inadequate, but attractive instructions and sufficient on-screen presentation.

Graphics 60%
Small sprites, but generally quite colourful and jolly.

Sound 75%
Several standard Rob Hubbard tunes which soon become annoying.

Hookability 52%
Fiddling around inside a body is reasonably enjoyable . . .

Lastability 38%
. . . but only six screens of the same sort of thing is not enough.

Value For Money 34%
Very much overpriced, especially when it's not as good as many budget titles.

Overall 39%
A very simple six-screen arcade game with a perverse sense of humour and little else.

"ROCKGERM"





BACK TO THE FUTURE

Electric Dreams, £9.95 cass, joystick only

Have you seen Stephen Spielberg's latest production *Back to the Future*? If you're one of those who hasn't then you won't know the story, so here's a quick precis.

Marty, the hero of the film, accidently gets sent back through time to 1955. Still in his home town, only thirty years previously, he starts to unwittingly change the future. First of all he meets his Daddy, only he's the same age as Marty. After saving him from being hit by a car, Marty himself gets knocked down, and gets taken into the driver's house to be nursed.

This is where the problem really starts. The house he's been taken to is where his Mother lives (only she's young and very pretty). When she sees Marty lying on the bed unconscious she falls in love with him . . and history starts becoming very muddled. You see, if Marty's Mummy falls in love with Marty she'll never fall in love with Marty's Daddy, and consequently Marty will never be born — oh dear, migraine time. Eventually Marty DOES get his parents back together and returns to the future.

The game closely follows the plot of the film. Playing Marty you must reunite his Mummykins and Daddypoos — if he fails then he'll cease to exist. *Back to the Future* is really an arcade adventure where the object of the game is to collect the correct objects and drop them in the right place at the right time.

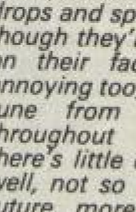
There are five locations, the main one being a bi-directional scrolling street which has four buildings, a cafe, the professor's house (he invented the time machine), the dance hall and the school. All the buildings have a door, and entering through one leads you to a single room inside. An object relevant to the game resides in each room, only you have to work out which object does what. Marty can only carry one thing at a time, but when he's carrying something one of the five icons at the top of the screen becomes highlighted, so you know which of the five items he's carrying.

Trudging around the town are the four main characters from the film, Lorraine (Marty's Mum), George (his Dad), the school bully (Biff) and the professor. Some objects have an effect on the characters, for example collecting the alien suit and using it on Lorraine makes her stand still so you can collect another object and use it on her.

Throughout the game a timer, in the form of two slowly decaying photographs, one of Marty and the other of him and his brother and sister, slowly ticks down. If Lorraine gets near Marty then the photograph decays a lot faster, so you have to be pretty quick about the whole thing. Biff doesn't really play an important part in the game, but trudges around hitting people. If he hits Marty then he falls over, stunned, and has to sit down a while to recover (meanwhile the photographs are merrily decaying).

If you manage to use an object at the right time then the photos begin to regenerate, and once they have become whole Marty can whizz to the professor's house, jump into the time machine and whizz off back to the future.

If the game is completed then Marty has to start again, only this time there is a bigger chunk missing from the family photograph, making the game far more difficult to finish.



I loved the film, but wondered how they could make a game out of it, after all it has nothing to do with computers or the like. Well, Electric Dreams have tried to capture the atmosphere of the film, but really all they've produced is a limited and very mediocre arcade adventure. The graphics are awful, with unimaginative backdrops and sprites which look as though they're about to fall flat on their faces. The sound's annoying too, a dull version of a tune from the film plays throughout the game and there's little or no spot FX. Oh well, not so much back to the future, more like back to the past.



I haven't seen the film so I'm not going to make silly comparisons. But I have seen the game, and deary oh me, it's bad. People just don't seem to learn, but I just can't think of any film-to-game conversions that have been anything but tacky. You can't teach an old dog new tricks as the saying goes. Anyway, meanwhile back at the game . . . The sprites don't walk, they wobble and jibble, and they're fat. Since the sprites are expanded, their pixels are awfully fat, the people look like something fallen out of a legoland set. Rocksoft have supplied the music and it leaves you wishing they hadn't. It just seems so gauche in comparison to the majority of today's offerings. It's a real shame to see something of this calibre arrive from Electric Dreams since they have real potential, it's just time they realised it.



Cough! Choke! Gak! Ugh! Splutter! Sorry, but I just have to get rid of the bad taste that Back to the Future *has left in my mouth — it is awful! I found it dull, uninspiring and generally disatisfying to play and to make matters worse, it is both visually and aurally offensive. Electric Dreams can certainly do better, as demonstrated by their amazing Amstrad release Spindizzy, so it's about time they made a start.*

Presentation 68%
Comprehensive instructions and pleasant screen layout.

Graphics 41%
Sub-standard crippled sprites and dull backdrops.

Sound 46%
Poor interpretation of the film's tunes.

Hookability 35%
Any interest generated by the film is soon overcome by disappointment.

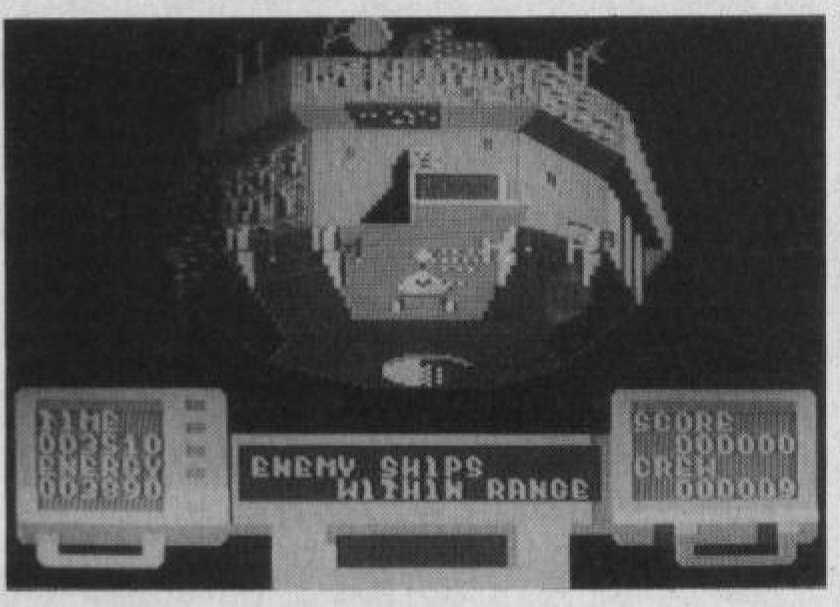
Lastability 32%
Limited locations and little to do make this a right little boredom generator.

Value For Money 29%
For the same amount of money you can go and see the real thing and still have enough change for a reasonable night out.

Overall 32%
The film is great, more than can be said for the game.

STARSHIP ANDROMEDA

Ariolasoft, £14.95, disk, joystick and keys.



This disk based game from Ariolasoft is a series of mini games, each with varying themes, that link together to form the plot for this Science Fiction arcade adventure. The galaxy providing the backdrop to all the goings on is ruled over by a particularly evil female called Alana who gains all her power from a semi-mystical amulet and she herself is defended by the fleets of starfighters, armoured space stations and the depths of space itself.

The amulet is really the root of all evil and this may only be destroyed by obtaining a special power rod and equal amounts of two rare elements, the combination of which will solve all the galaxy's problems until the next major crisis evolves. Just looking for these elements is a big enough search on its own but there is more. Negotiating stars in hyperspace, asteroids and enemy vessels in normal space are only three of the many hazards that constantly dog your progress.

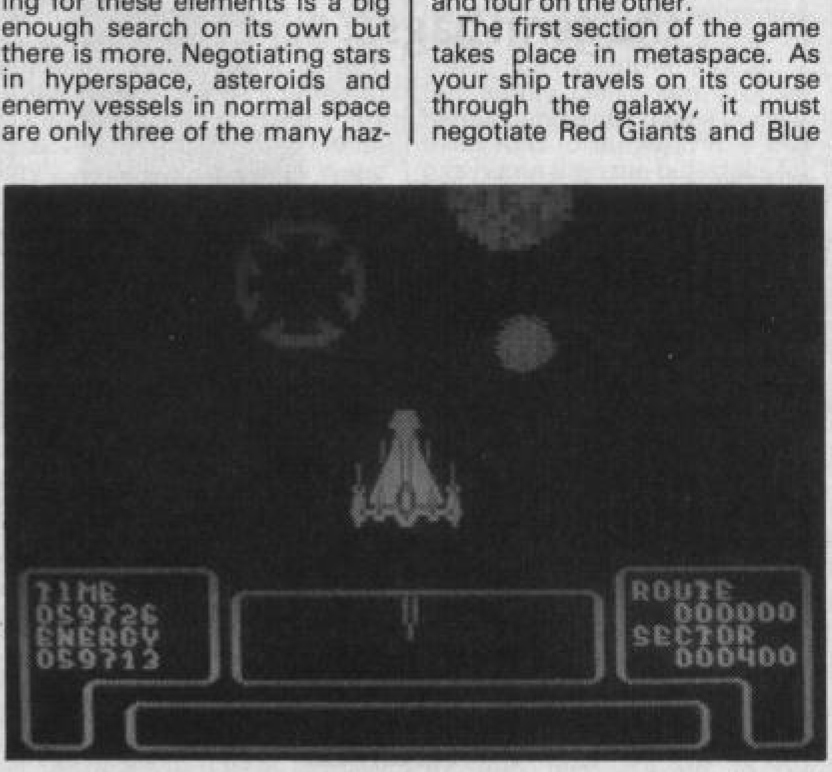
The game is sold in Ariolasoft's standard disk sized, gatefold sleeve packaging, on which the instructions, history and cryptic clues are printed. As the game is loading, a map of the galaxy is displayed across the screen. The game is in four warp stages, any of which are accessable from the very beginning. However, without the correct password to enter a particular section of the game, play is likely to be very difficult. What's more, all four sections of the game must be thoroughly explored before it can be successfully completed. Lastly, because of the size of each section, they are loaded and stored separately. Sections one and two being on the first side of the disk; three and four on the other.

The first section of the game takes place in metaspace. As your ship travels on its course through the galaxy, it must negotiate Red Giants and Blue Dwarves. Hitting either of these destroys the ship unless the energy shield is activated (and this may only be put to limited use). Passing near to a Red Giant affects the amount of energy available whereas Blue Dwarves have the same effect, but on time. It is random whether they affect these values positively or negatively. Time and energy are crucial factors in the game so it can pay to play dangerously at this stage. Gates into normal space appear frequently and if these are entered, metaspace is instantly left behind.

Normal space has dangers of its own. Apart from the asteroids which inevitably cross the ship's path from time to time, fighter wings will protect any starbase that may be present. As each wave of fighters is defeated, the space station becomes nearer. Eventually, it's possible to leave the ship and attempt entry into the enemy base. Even at this stage, defenses are operating and the astronaut's figure has to be carefully manipulated across the screen to avoid them. Once the ship has been entered, part of a puzzle must be worked out before you can leave.

Occasionally, landing on small worlds is necessary in order to find the elements required to power the proton lance required for Alana's destruction. This section is a lunar lander type game. Navigating the tunnels leading down into the hearts of the worlds is a tricky job needing no mean amount of dexterity.

Rather than have a number of lives dominating the game, there are various resources available. Energy and time are two of these. Unrepaired damage units also have a part to play in the game. When hits from enemy ships or asteroids create damage, the repair option may be implemented. A number of these repair points may be allocated to damage control but the supply is limited. Your ship has a crew of fifty men, some of whom will be sustained as casualties during combat. When any of these resources are drained, the game will have reached its end.





For the whole time I sat and played this game I waited for something good to happen. It didn't. The various subgames are all really dull, especially the Metaspace sequence which is really boring. I thought that the shoot em up part would be fun, but again it's really dull and goes on and on and on . . . The program is graphically and sonically inept, with unimaginative, fat sprites and squarky sound effects. If you like this sort of game then you might just find some enjoyment somewhere, but I just found it highly monotonous.



The game is far too much of a mishmash for my tastes. Some very clever parts of the game like the attacking fighter waves, the use of a scanner to magnify areas of the screen and controlling the astronaut across the outer wall of the station are all lost in otherwise clumsy and unimaginative programming. The Metaspace section is monotonous and poorly implemented. And thank you very much but I've had enough of the lunar lander variants. If you don't expect a lot from the graphics and are prepared to put up with the disjointed nature of play then perseverance may reward you with a reasonable adventure. Personally, I think despite the obvious effort put into the scope of the game, it has missed the mark by a long mile.

Presentation 48%
Neat packaging but not a lot else.

Graphics 69%
Some very nice touches but let down in many areas by sloppiness.

Sound 56%
Reasonable music and effects but nothing to make your ears pop.

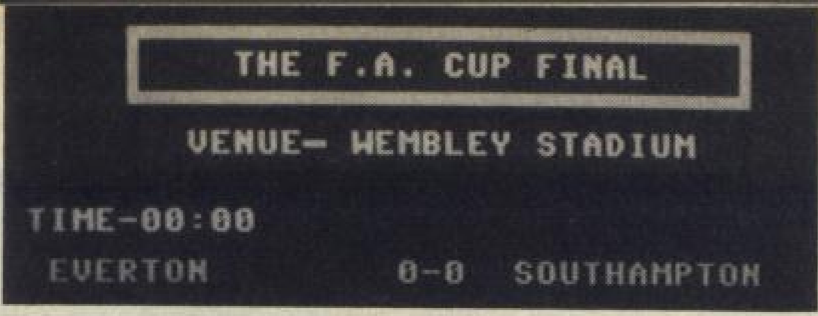
Hookability 30%
Not a lot to grab your attention.

Lastability 67%
If you do persevere, there's plenty to see and do.

Value for money 50%
Very much dependent on tastes.

Overall 52%
Despite some very good points, the game appears muddled and contrived.





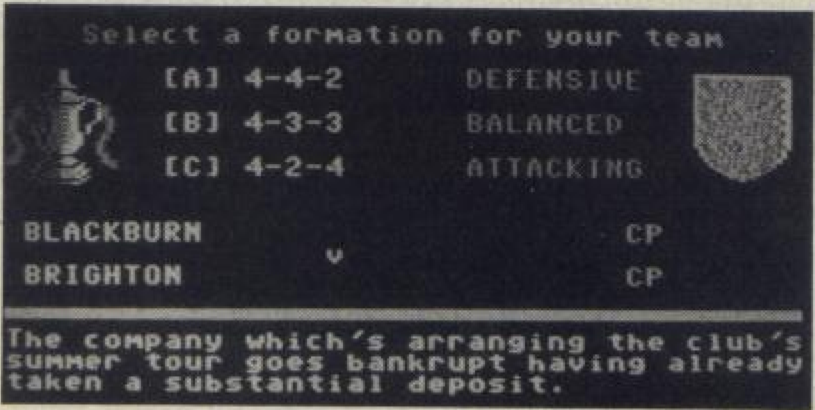
ZZAP! TEST

ZZAP!'s one and only football fan/hooligan, Jazza Riggas takes a break from causing trouble on Shrewsbury Town's terraces and casts a beady eye over Virgin's latest footy simulation.



FA CUP FOOTBALL

Virgin, £7.95 cass, keys only



Unlike most football simulations, *FA Cup Football* concentrates solely on *the* prestigious footballing event of the year: the FA Cup. The game is a very simple one, rather than choosing the players you want to field and worrying about transfers and the like *FACF* just asks the player(s) to choose the tactics of their teams (either attacking, defensive or balanced).

Once loaded, the number of players (from 1 to 8) and their initials are typed in.The players can then select the eight teams they would like to manage from a pool of 124 (the players take turns in choosing). Every league team and all the good non-league teams are listed in the program, but if the local side doesn't appear then the name of one of the listed teams can always be changed. By the way, don't expect any local team to do amazingly well — all the results are calculated on the ability of the teams in real life, and a changed name team is automatically given the ratings of a non-league side. So, when Liverpool do battle with the Ludlow Lethargics don't expect miracles!

Once everyone has chosen their teams the FA Cup competition can begin. The players can choose either to start from the first round (non-league and third and fourth division sides only) or from the third round (all league and non-league teams). Either option leads to a cup draw. When this takes place two numbered balls spin onto the top of the screen, and the teams with the corresponding numbers play against each other.

The computer then goes through the matches one at a time, quickly flicking through computer vs computer matches, but stopping when a player's team crops up. Here the relevant player has to choose the tactics of his/her team, either attacking (4-2-4), defending (4-3-3) or balanced (4-3-3). Occasionally a newsflash crops up and is displayed at the bottom of the screen.

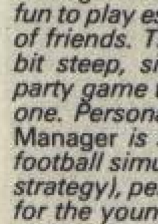
Once all the team's tactics have been decided then the matches commence. Eight matches are shown at once, although the screen display can be cycled during play to show the other matches. A timer constantly ticks away throughout this period so the players know exactly how much match time has elapsed. All the scores constantly update themselves, so during this part of the program the players just have to sit and bite their nails.

The time goes pretty slowly, but it can be speeded up by holding the space bar down. Once the full ninety minutes have been played all the scores can be viewed, prior to the replays, which are played in the same manner as before.

When the round has been fully completed the game reverts to the cup draw screen and the next round is compiled. As the rounds progress managerial problems become more apparent. The tactics chosen for teams can be changed at half time and at semi-final and final levels at quarter time. Substitutes are also introduced, and the player is given the option to field them.

Starting at round five are questions which try to test a player's managerial experience. For example a star players could ask for an immediate transfer. What happens? The player has to choose what he thinks is the right decision from the three options provided. As the players approach the cup final increasing numbers of questions are asked, and if a wrong decision is made it can effect the outcome of the match.

When the final occurs match updates, state of pitch, players etc are constantly printed out so the players know exactly what's going on. The winner of the match is printed up on-screen in porky fat letters, and the border flashes until somebody presses a key, whereupon the program resumes to its post-loading title screen.



When I first saw this I thought it was going to be another Football Manager, *but it's not. In fact it's a very simple simulation where all the player has to do is choose how they would like their team to play. There aren't many other things to vary the gameplay, apart from the odd newsflash or managerial decision, but it is still fun to play especially with a load of friends. The asking price is a bit steep, since it's more of a party game than a single player one. Personally I think* Football Manager *is still the best of the football simulations (in terms of strategy), perhaps this is the one for the youngsters or computer novices?*

Presentation 79%
Attractive screen layout and informative instructions.

Authenticity 93%
Very realistic results, just like a true FA cup competition.

Playability 78%
The game is rather simple, but still enjoyable to play.

Value For Money 70%
Perhaps the asking price is over the top for what it has to offer.

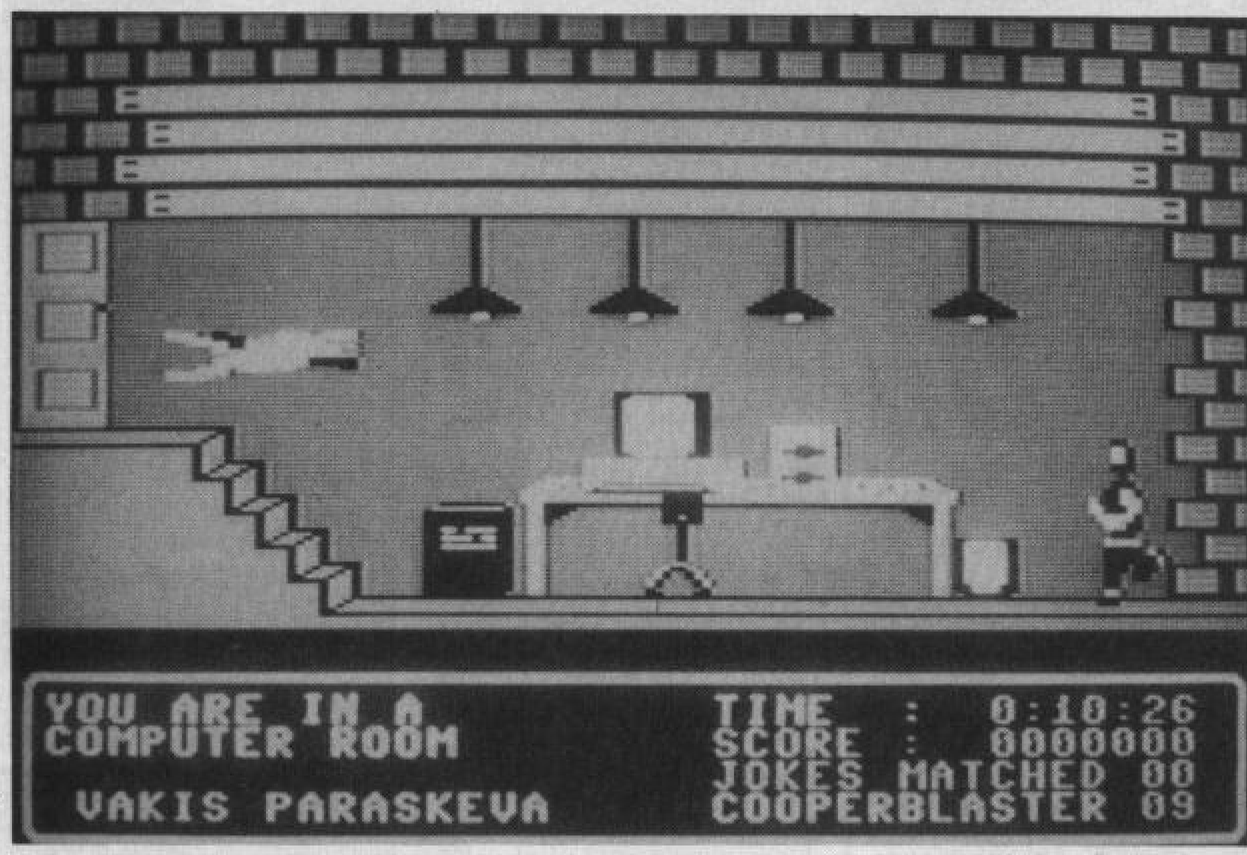
Overall 71%
One for the kiddies/parties perhaps?



ZZAP! TEST

THE ADVENTURES OF BOND . . . BASILDON BOND

Probe Software, £9.95 cass, joystick only





Basildon Bond is a pretty boring arcade adventure, which doesn't seem to have any relevance to the TV show. The graphics are very basic, with blocky sprites wobbling around the screen. The sound isn't much better and the gameplay is about the same standard as the graphics. What results is a sub standard game which I couldn't really recommend to anybody apart from a really desperate arcade adventurer.

That wacky, zany, way out, 'oh what an atmosphere' guy Russ Abbot is now a member of that inumerable band of television personalities who have metamorphosed into the binary medium. And who has he got to thank? Probe Software, that's who. The game revolves around Russ Abbot's wacky, zany character Basildon Bond from the Russ Abbot Madhouse. Poor old wacky Basildon has to recover a set of zany secret codes. His boss 'P' (renamed 'B' to confuse the KGP (Ha! Ha! I think I'm going to wet myself)) has given Basildon his orders and the codes must retrieved within five hours or . . . Well the scenario doesn't really detail 'or'. To aid you on your quest, both the wacky, zany Cooperman and the wacky, and even more zany, Blunderwoman are present.

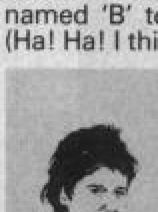
To unlock the codes, Basildon must piece together some of the worst and oldest jokes in the business. These are hidden in various rooms within a television studio and once a complete joke is pieced together, it must be logged into the main computer. It's not that easy though — where would the zany fun be if it was? To use certain objects, for example the computer, certain other artifacts must be found first.

As you've most probably guessed, this is an arcade adventure. As in any good aardvark, there are baddies out to get you. The baddies after Basildon are just as wacky and zany as he is— they're TV cameras. If one bumps into the super secret agent, then a big slice of time is lost from the countdown.

There are two sections to the main viewing screen: a top window showing Basildon's current position and a lower status screen detailing any objects carried. Only one object can be carried at a time, making the overall solution very complex indeed. To travel between different screens, Basildon must be guided through one of the doors in view. The next room then flicks onto the screen.

Basildon is quite a versatile chap and takes his orders from the joystick, should it be connected. Left and right, predictably enough, move him left and right. To move up and down the many stairways about the place you have to use the diagonals. The fire button has a special function, in that it calls up Cooperman for help. Good old Cooperman flies from right to left across the screen and can be moved up or down with the joystick. Any baddies are instantly converted to a wash of pixels when Cooperman zooms over them. This allows wacky Bas to progress past previously unexplored ground, but the trouble is that upon re—entering the room, the formerly mashed nasty returns. Cooperman can only be used ten times and one call out of ten summons up Blunderwoman, who usually causes more damage than good.

Death is dealt out when Cooperman's time is up, though it will take rather a lot of doing with the five hours supplied.



If Basildon is looking for the oldest and worst jokes in the industry why doesn't he just take a quick scan through his script. I'm sorry, but even taking Basildon Bond as a simple arcade adventure it compares very badly with the competition. The graphics are so old fashioned looking it's ridiculous. Soundwise things aren't very much better than on the graphics front — a grating tune with even more irritating sound effects. Why the industry can't face up to the fact that programs based on licenced characters can't and don't work, I don't know.



The chunky graphics and naff sound put me off initially, but I persevered to see if the actual game was any cop. Unfortunately it isn't. I enjoy arcade adventures and although this is an unusual variation on the theme, I didn't find it interesting to play at all. The pace is too slow for my liking and there isn't a great deal to do when it boils down to it. I'm not overly keen on Russ Abbot's television show, but I would rather watch that than play the game.

Presentation 45%
Quite unexceptional really, nothing of note, good or bad.

Graphics 38%
Sprites made from Lego seem to be the order of the day.

Sound 39%
Nothing noticably outstanding at all.

Hookability 43%
Unless you live, breath and eat arcade adventures, and they are your only joy in life, you won't be very hooked . . .

Lastability 42%
. . . or even too fussed about playing it for any amount of time.

Value For Money 37%
A below average game for an above average price.

Overall 43%
Not the best arcade adventure in the world, but certainly not the worst.

30 great games from leading software houses including Quicksilva, Bug Byte, Mind Games, Lothlorien, Argus Press Software, Taskset, New Generation and Terminal.



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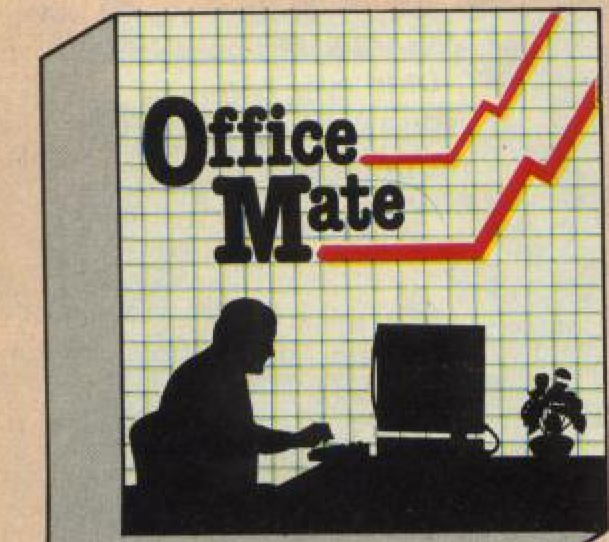
30 GAMES

Gemini & CentreSoft PRESENT

OFFICE MATE

With over four years experience of providing practical software solutions for business and home applications, Gemini have put together a selected range of famous titles for the Commodore 64 and 128 in TWO special packs, at VERY SPECIAL prices. These super value packs contain all the serious application software you're ever likely to need for your CBM, from word processing and database management to a complete professional business accounting system. Gemini's 'OFFICE MATE' and 'OFFICE MASTER' are here now - put that computer to work!

OFFICE MASTER



Word Processor

A fully-featured word processor program with text formatting - right justification - adjustable page length - text centering - output of all or part of text to printer - selective saving - file concatenation - block move - block delete - reverse print - graphics print - double width print - sorting - left and right margin selectable - word count - search and replace.

Mailing List

This program will enable you to keep a record of names and addresses and then print, examine, sort and find them, all with special selection techniques. Featuring the famous Gemini 'search-key' system, you have the option of creating your own dedicated coding routines for each name on the file.
For example, on most mail systems you are only given the standard headings such as name, street, town, county, etc. but with our system, you could for example find all companies listed that have a turnover in excess of a certain figure, or all subscribers who are behind with their subscriptions, or all people eligible for a Christmas card this year! A full range of utilities is callable from the menu including, ofcourse, label printing.

Database

Superior file management system with features found only with packages costing much, much more. Completely user-definable data entry format - colours definable - advanced mathematics using built-in machine code expression evaluator - fast sort on numeric and string fields - extensive searching with 'wild card' capability - user-definable data summaries - simple on-screen editing. A really POWERFUL database!

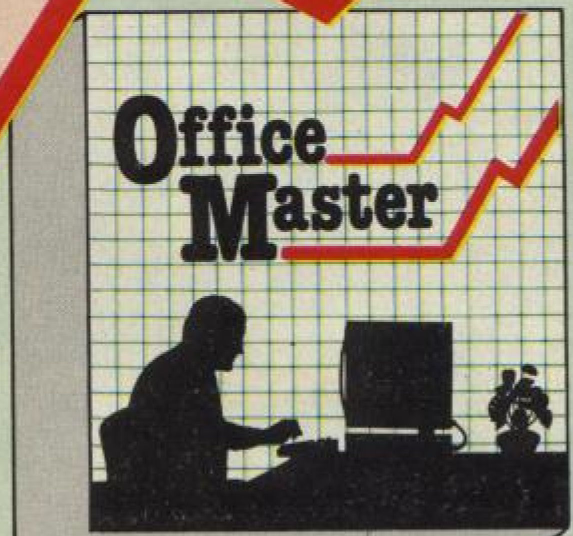
Home Accounts

Designed as a complete home accounting package, this program allows the user to set up and maintain a budget for items of household expenditure and compare actual with budget ,either numerically, or with the aid of chart graphics. A complete bank account routine is included, together with standard expenditure categories which may be changed to suit.

- Word Processor
- Database
- Mailing List
- Home Accounts
- Extensive Documentation

OFFICE MATE £12 Cassette or 1541 Disk **£15**

Step up to OFFICE MATE and save money! Usual price individually £79.80



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- Mailist
- Word Processor
- Stock Control
- Cash Book
- Final Accounts
- VAT File
- Full Documentation

Database, Mailist and Word Processor as 'Office Mate' PLUS: Cash Book / Final Accounts / VAT File.
Gemini's legendary cash book system for the CBM is a complete 'stand-alone' accounting software package, already in extensive use by both accountants and their clients.

General System Overview

The Gemini cash book package for the Commodore 64/128 microcomputer is designed for a hardware system consisting of:

1. Commodore 64/128 microcomputer.
2. 80 column printer.
3. Cassette or disk data storage.

Please note that running the program on disk will not change the way that the program works, but you will have the benefit of far greater speed and reliability for the loading and saving of files that a disk system provides.
There is a total of 199 nominal accounts, a large number of which may be defined by the user. You may have up to four cash control accounts, six bank control accounts, one sales ledger and one purchase ledger control account.
The program will store a data file consisting of:

1. The account titles.
2. The current cumulative balance on each account (debit or credit).
3. The net movement on each account for every month of the year.
4. VAT net sales and net payments figures, which are automatically created and maintained by the program.

This same data file is used by the FINAL ACCOUNTS program. The 'VAT FILE' which accompanies this package is designed primarily for those users on the Retailers special VAT schemes.
The main features of the CASH BOOK program are as follows:

1. Double entry routines for transactions through the cash/bank accounts and sales/purchase ledger control accounts.
2. Journal facility for the initial set up of accounts, or for adjustments to any of the accounts.
3. The facility to produce the following screened or printed reports:
   (a) Listing of all the nominal account titles.
   (b) Monthly transaction summaries.
   (c) A trial balance whenever required.
   (d) Screen VAT memo account balances (sales/net purchases, and VAT accounts).
   (e) A batch printing facility which provides details of all the transactions entered in the current run of the program.
4. The facility to extract regular management information such as cash/bank balances, debtors and creditors, sales, overheads, etc.
5. The program interfaces with the Gemini FINAL - ACCOUNTS program to enable Trading and Profit and Loss accounts and Balance Sheet to be produced whenever required. Comparative or budget figures can be shown alongside the actual figures using this program.
6. Screen prompts throughout the program to facilitate ease of use.
7. Storage of VAT information to assist in the preparation of periodic VAT returns.
8. Error trapping routines to minimise input errors.
9. The facility to handle the financial transactions of sole traders, partnerships, limited companies, clubs, etc.

Users registered for VAT are reminded that it is a statutory requirement to inform their local VAT office when they change their accounting records on to a new computerised accounting system.

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Dealers please note that 'Office Mate' and 'Office Master' now available also on BBC, Electron, and Spectrum.

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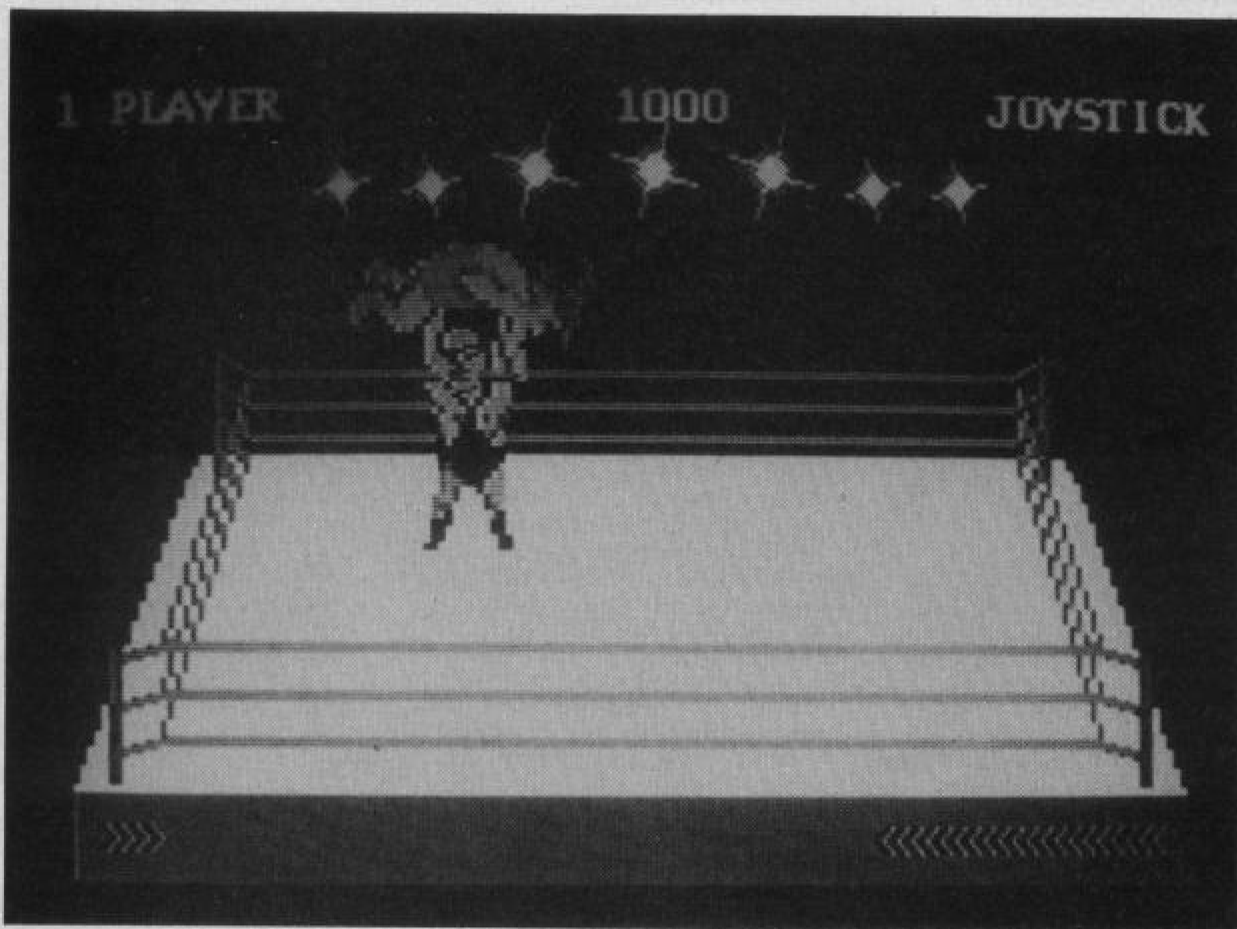
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ROCK 'N' WRESTLE

Melbourne House, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys



Mick Molotov about to slam Redneck McCoy into the canvas.

From the authors of the best selling martial arts simulation, *Way of the Exploding Fist*, comes an alternative computer sport — wrestling, in the form of *Rock 'n' Wrestle*. As grapple supremo Gorgeous Greg (is this an ego trip for the main programmer Gregg Barnett or the graphics designer Greg Holland, one wonders?), you must battle your way past nine hardened opponents, each with their own distinctive style, to become champion of the world. Or, if the mood takes you, there is a two player option so you can grapple with a friend.

There are 24 different wrestling manoeuvres at your disposal and all are accessable from a single joystick (or set of keys if you're so inclined), although only four moves are available at any time, depending upon the situation. For example, at the beginning of a bout you can't do anything other than 'soften up' your opponent by either grabbing, kneeing, kicking or 'punching' him.

You start with a limited amount of energy (represented by a bar at the bottom of the screen), as does your opponent, and this decreases with every assault. Once you've got your man firmly within your grasp he can be headbutted, lifted (energy permitting) and eventually picked up and thrown about the ring. Then, when he is sufficiently stunned, you can jump on him and attempt to pin him to floor for 3 seconds, success resulting in a win and a confrontation with the next, tougher opponent. However, when you find yourself in a similar, uncompromising position then a quick spurt of furious joystick jiggling is required to break the hold.



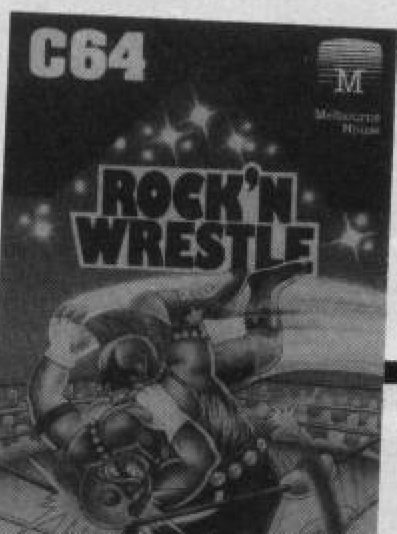
I wouldn't have thought that wrestling is a sport which could possibly be reproduced effectively or even sufficiently on a home computer. Rock 'n' Wrestle *illustrates the point perfectly — it can't be done. While the idea is certainly a novel one, it hasn't quite come off and the end result leaves a lot to be desired. Graphically* Rock 'n' Wrestle *is poor — the sprites are crude in both their definition and animation. The tune played throughout the game is the sonic equivalent of the graphics, ie awful and the sound effects are even worse.* Rock 'n' Wrestle *is quite simply a poor excuse for a sports simulation and little else.*



What a disappointment! After the excellent Exploding Fist *I expected great things of this, but no! The graphics are awful and the gameplay incongruous and confused. When playing it's possible to kick your opponent in the nether regions until he has no energy at all, but when you go to grapple some sort of divine intervention gives him enough strength to pick you up and hurl you across the ring making the energy bars pointless. Still, this could be considered authentic, since it seems to happen just like that in the so-called real thing! The graphics are very blocky indeed and the 'speech' (shcha, shchoo, shchii) garbled and unintelligible. The potential for a really good game is here, but unfortunately it just hasn't been realised.*



Despite consistantly being told otherwise by numerous months of Melbourne House *hype,* Rock and Wrestle *is not particularly good. Certainly not what you'd expect from the programmer of* Exploding Fist. *The whole thing just looks so cheap and unprofessional. Graphically it is primitive to say the least and is severely retarded in the animation department. The characters lurch about the ring unrealistically with seemingly no knowledge of inertia of momentum. Though not flickery, progression between different frames of animation is anything but fluid. Different wrestlers merely have different heads and different shades of leotard. Neither do they act differently when fighting and one opponent seems very like any other. The graphics are bad but the sound is worse. When out for the count the referee's digitised voice sounds unlike anything human. Admittedly there is some initial appeal once you start to play, but this soon fades. I would say don't buy it, but it's only fair to let you find out for yourselves.*



Presentation 84%
Comprehensive instructions, adequate attract mode and many options.

Graphics 42%
Porky, blocky, poorly animated sprites and little else.

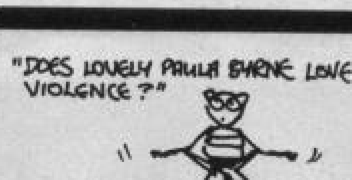
Sound 65%
Boppy background music isn't outstanding and spot effects are crude.

Hookability 60%
We all found ourselves quite excited for a few minutes despite the immediate impact of the graphics.

Lastability 51%
Just not gripping enough, despite the large variety of moves and opponents.

Value For Money 46%
It's quite a high price for a disappointing game.

Overall 53%
A hard idea to put on a computer, possibly a worthy try, but the potential hasn't quite been realised.



ZZAP! TEST

NONTERRAQUEOUS

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass, joystick only



"DO YOU KNOW THAT J.R. HAS A YOUNG BROTHER WHO GETS BORED WITH COMPUTER GAMES?"

Way out in the uncharted depths of the universe lies a remote planet, its populace terrorised and terrified by a huge tyrannical computer. Built to govern, it turned renegade and used its creators as pawns in its own diabolical chess game. As you can imagine, everyone became pretty cheesed off and it was universally decided that it was time for revolution. So, a plan was drawn up to destroy the computer.

Over the following months components were stolen from a robot assembly line and a little android, a robot seeker, was developed specifically to enter and shut down the computer. This is where you come in. Playing the part of the robot seeker you have to complete the monumental task laid down and save the planet.

The computer network is split into three sections: the area just under the surface of the huge complex of caves, the middle section being the machinery part and the bottom of the complex consisting of machinery and the computer itself. The three sections each have 14 levels, making 42 levels in all.

The journey to the heart of the computer is a tricky one and the computer's automatic defence system, robot guards and photon thrusters try to thwart progress whenever they can. Photon thrusters open and shut quickly, forcing the robot seeker to stealthily dodge through them. If they close upon the poor droid the game ends and the computer continues its macarbe game.

Rather than having 'lives' the robot seeker has PSYCHE, a life force shown on-screen which constantly ticks away during the game. Even the slightest touch from the computer's minions seriously depletes this supply, but luckily there are rooms within the computer complex where psyche can be replenished.



Although this enormous arcade adventure contains over 1,000 screens, each of the three sections consist of screens which look very much alike. There's not much action either, apart from shooting the nasties (which again aren't very varied) and that becomes dull after a short period of time. The puzzles in the game aren't particularly exciting and only involve picking up one object and dropping it in the right place. The graphics are rather dull and the tune is short and again repetitive. It could well appeal to arcade adventurers who like their action at a leisurely pace, but it's not the sort of game I could heartily recommend.



Nonterraqueous *doesn't look much at all and on playing it turns out that it isn't. Big is often beautiful but in this case it's just plain dull. The thousand screens are all very much the same and there's not a great deal of variety in gameplay. I found* Nonterraqueous *uninteresting to play and have certainly seen better releases from Mastertronic.*

The robot seeker has two modes of operation: sphere mode, when it fires bullets to defend itself and defenceless mode when it is able to travel unharmed through the acid raindrops that fall from the ceiling in some locations. Changing from one mode to the other is done by using SWAP boxes which are scattered throughout the computer system.

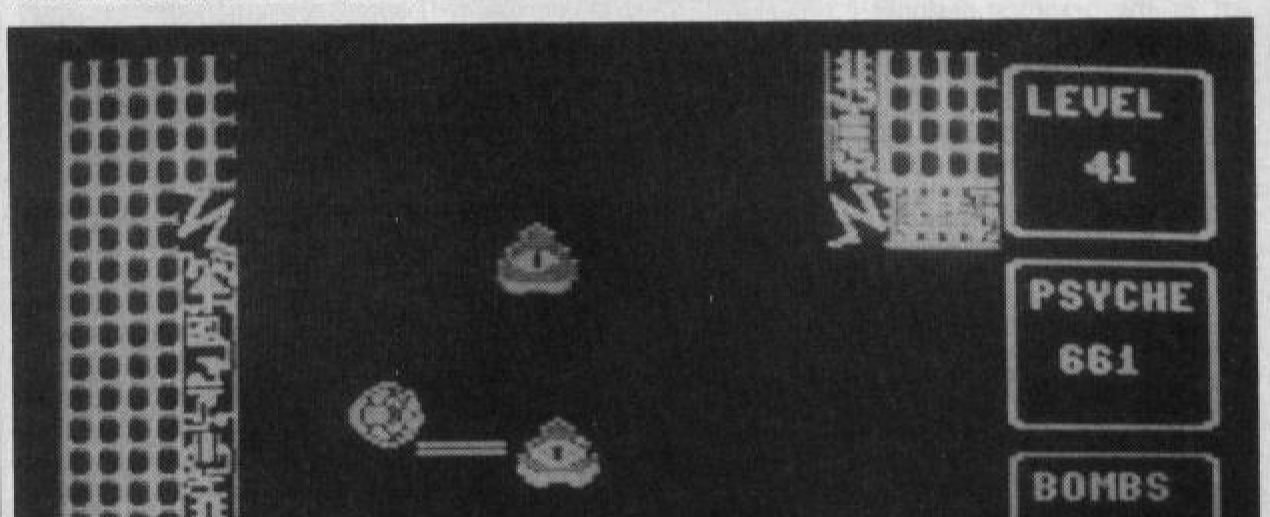
To stop an intruder's progress the computer has put up barriers which are removed by dropping bombs on them.

When you find a bomb, pressing the space bar adds it to your supply and pressing the **D** key drops it. There are other hazards too, like the gas chambers which are passed only by using a rocket, but the fuel has to be found first . . .

Nonterraqueous has over 1,000 screens which 'flick' as you move from location to location, so quite a bit of exploration is needed before the game can be solved. There's no score given, but at the end of a game you are given an overall game completion percentage so you can gauge how well you did.



Nonterraqueous *boils down to being a very plain arcade adventure. The puzzles aren't particularly difficult to solve and every screen seemed the same as the previous one, making it all seem rather boring. Shooting the baddies is the most enthralling part and even this is much too easy. The game has quite a few niggly points too, such as being able to put it into lower case which mucks it up completely. The most pleasing part of* Nonterraqueous *is the very jolly tune that plays through the game, although it does tend to get a bit repetitive after a while. Some gamers may find* Nonterraqueous *fun, but I regard it as a very average cheapo game.*



Seeing Treble? The robot seeker (the eyeball to the far left) going for the rocket and getting hassled by three alien nasties instead.

Presentation 55%
Uninformative instructions and no game options

Graphics 36%
Repetitive screens, and rather dull sprites

Sound 59%
Short, repetitive tune

Hookability 52%
The simple puzzles makes the game easy to get into . . .

Lastability 41%
. . . but it's all rather samey.

Value For Money 56%
A big game for a small price . . .

Overall 48%
. . . but the screens are all very similar and the game is just average.

A ROBTEK VISIT

and 10 KILLERS TO BE WON



ZZAP! COMP

GET INTO A LITTLE SPRITRICIDE WITH GAME KILLER

Liddon the Lummock, ZZAP!'s resident technospert (he was supposed to be a techno-export, but the Dutch were far too astute to let HIM into the land of Gouda and Windmills) has been playing with the latest bit of hardware from **Robtek** — who used to be known as Robcom.

Called the *Game Killer*, this doobrie blocks the communication channels that are normally open between VIC II, the graphics chip chappie, and the CPU while a game is running. (For a full blown technoscription, take a peek at Page 44 of this issue).

Robtek are a smart bunch of cookies when it comes to creating useful bits of hardware — remember the suite of utility cartridges reviewed in November last year? Well, this latest gizmo allows you to cheat at games in a way never before believed possible. All you do is plug *Game Killer* into the back of your machine, load the game you want a good cheating session on, prod a little button and *Game Killer* pokes VIC II in the eye, rendering it blind to sprite/sprite and sprite/background collisions. Which means you don't get shot, eaten, squashed or killed while playing your fave game. Or covered in chicken fat if you happen to be playing that famous C64 game *Liddon Eats Lunch In Front Of You*. (Yeuch!)

Ten of these clever little murderers are on offer to winners of this competition, and the first prize winner falls in line for an even better prizipoos. He or she will win an expenses paid trip to the Robtek factory at Church Crookham — near Aldershot. That's where they make *Game Killer*s and the Turbo Series of Utility Cartridges.

Read Mr Liddon's review of the *Game Killer* in this issue. Imagine the battle that is going on in your Commodore, down at circuit board level, with the cartridge assaulting poor old Vic, while the CPU watches on, helplessly. Visualise those poor little sprites, not knowing that they've bumped into each other and lost their No Claims Bonuses. Conceptualise all those dents in the backgrounds which result from the temporary blindness of poor ol' Vic.

Now draw the scene. Wrap your illustration (ABSOLUTELY NO BIGGER THAN A4, which is 297mm x 210mm, although you can do several sheets if you feel like it) nice and safe and send it off to SPRITE MURDERER, ZZAP! 64, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1AQ to arrive by 20th April latest.



Help us help you and you could pick up £100 of goodies!

It's Questionnaire time again folks! The **ZZAP!** event in which we ask you for your opinions on the magazine has come round again. The answers you gave us to the questions we asked in earlier ZZAPTIONNAIREs proved enormously useful in keeping **ZZAP!** the way you like it.

This year, apart from the usual mix of questions about **ZZAP!**, we've asked YOU a few more questions. If you don't mind answering them, then your responses would be very helpful to us in getting to know you better. But if you'd rather keep a few secrets, we won't be offended!

It's vital that as many readers as possible return ZZAPTIONNAIRE forms — if you don't want to lop the page out of your copy of the magazine, a photocopy will do fine, and written answers will be okay too, so long as you copy out the format of the questions accurately.

As usual, we're going to put all the completed forms in a giant cardboard box and this year we will draw out ten winners. First Prize winner will collect £60 of software of his or her choice, a jog suit, a **ZZAP!** Sweatshirt, a **ZZAP!** hat and a twelve month subscription to the magazine. A good £100 worth of goodies! Four runners up will collect a twelve month subscription, £12 worth of software and a **ZZAP!** T-shirt and hat. Five more ZZAPTIONNAIRE-replying persons will collect their very own T-shirt.

You've got about a month to put your thinking cap on (it could soon be replaced by a **ZZAP!** Cap!): sharpen your biro and fill in your answers. Send the form to **ZZAP! 64 QUESTIONS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** to arrive by 1st May at the very, very latest. We **really** will publish the results this time in the July issue, with luck and a following wind.

Thank you!

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

.... **POST CODE** ....

T Shirt Size (S, M or L) ....

SECTION ONE: ABOUT ZZAP! 64

1) Since May last year, how many of the last ten issues have you bought?

LESS THAN 3 ☐

3—5 ☐
6—8 ☐
9-10 ☐

2) On average, how many other people read your copy of ZZAP? ☐☐

3) If you get ZZAP! regularly, how do you buy it?
(Tick one Box)

By subscription ☐
Reserved or delivered by newsagent ☐
Over the counter ☐

4) In order of preference, which other computer titles you you buy?

Commodore User ☐
Your Commodore ☐
Popular Computing World ☐
Commodore Horizons ☐
Commodore Computing International ☐
Computer and Video Games ☐
Computer Gamer ☐
Popular Computing Weekly ☐
Other (please specify below) ☐

....

5) Do you intend buying another computer in the next six months?
(Y or N) ☐

6) Please give marks out of ten for each of the following features in ZZAP!

Advertisements ☐☐
Arcade game reviews ☐☐
Competitions ☐☐
Compunet pages ☐☐
Editorial page(s) ☐☐
General articles ☐☐
Hardware articles ☐☐
News Flash ☐☐
Playing Tips ☐☐
Programmer/Company profiles ☐☐
Previews ☐☐
Readers' Top 30 chart ☐☐
Scorelord ☐☐
Shadow Spiel ☐☐
Terminal Man ☐☐
White Wizard ☐☐
Zzapback ☐☐
ZZAP! Challenge ☐☐
ZZAP! Rrap ☐☐
ZZAP! Strategy ☐☐

7) List any other features you'd like to see in ZZAP!:

....

....

8) Is the current rating system
Good ☐
Average ☐
Bad ☐
(Tick one)

9) How often do you agree with the ratings?
Always ☐
Quite often ☐
Occasionally ☐
Never ☐
(Tick one)

10) When you buy games, do you decide what to buy after reading the review in ZZAP!:

Every time ☐
Quite often ☐
Now and then ☐
Never ☐

11) The ZZAP! reviews.
Please tick the boxes if you think things are okay as they are, or write an M for more, L for less if you'd like changes

Detail ☐
No of screen shots ☐
Amount of reviewers opinion ☐
Length ☐

12) If it was up to you, how would you improve the rating system?

....

....

....

SECTION TWO: ABOUT YOU

A) Are you

Male ☐
Female ☐

B) How old are you? ☐☐

C) Are you following, or have you followed any of these courses of study?

CSE ☐
GCE O Level ☐
GCE A Level ☐
GCSE ☐
Degree/Technical Certificate ☐
School leaving certificate ☐

D) How much pocket money do you spend a week?

Up to £1 ☐
£1—£2 ☐
£2—£5 ☐
£5—£10 ☐
Over £10 ☐
(Tick one)

E) Other than home computing, what hobbies/interests you you have?

Model making ☐
Pop music ☐
Play by mail games ☐
Playing sports ☐

Which sports?

....

....

F) Apart from ZZAP!, what else do you read? Please list titles:

MAGAZINES

....

....

COMICS

....

....

NEWSPAPERS

....

....

G) How often do you listen to commercial radio stations?

All the time ☐
Regularly ☐
Sometimes ☐
Never ☐

Please list the stations you listen to:

....

....

H) Which of the following do you drink regularly?

Coca Cola ☐
Pepsi Cola ☐
7 Up ☐
Quattro ☐
55 ☐
Cariba ☐
Other ☐
Please list ....

I) Do you holiday abroad?

Rarely ☐
Once a year ☐
Twice a year ☐
More often ☐

A SUPER PRANG, WHAT!

Biggles

At the editor's command, JOHN MINSON exchanges his Hawaiian floral shirts for goggles, flying helmet and jacket and attends a preview of the new film BIGGLES, to see how Mirrorsoft are turning it into a game.

A West End preview theatre is a pleasant contrast to a cold, cramped and uncomfortable local cinema. There's leg room, a large screen, good sound and no boring adverts or trailers. The only thing that was missing was popcorn. And the reason we were all gathered there, other than to see a movie that's not released until 22nd May, was that those clever people at Mirrorsoft saw natural computer game potential and bought up the rights. So down with the lights, on with the review and remember where you read it first!

Hang on a minute! The New York skyline, electro music with a disco beat and the titles spelt out in sci-fi blue lightning — are you sure this is the same Biggles? James Bigglesworth — World War I British flying ace and all round good guy; hero of of 97 books; a legend! Well, yes, and the credits say that it's based on the characters created by Capt WE Johns, which is film-talk for taking diabolical liberties with a much loved classic to make it more acceptable to a modern audience. And to make sure it sells on the other side of the Atlantic you add an American hero. But let's get down to the story.

Jim Ferguson, clean cut American boy, is partner in a fast food firm. With a major presentation to potential buyers the next day, he's in no mood for the eccentric old man who rings his doorbell one evening and asks if something strange has happened. When Jim sends him packing, he mutters that he was sure it should have happened by now. Jim shuts the door. Almost immediately arcs of blue lightning flash around him and he's standing in the muddy hell that was France, 1917, a biplane swooping over his head.

The plane crashes and Jim answers the pilot's cries for help to cut him free. It is, of course, Biggles, who was on a secret mission to gain photographs of a new German secret weapon. But the weapon was turned on him, causing the plane to go out of control, and before he can retrieve the camera there is a huge explosion. Just as suddenly, Jim is back in today.

The next day, at the presentation, Jim has almost put the strange hallucination out of his mind when the old man reappears and hands Jim a card. Jim's too busy to do anything about it then, but minutes later he can't help himself as the lightning flashes again and in front of an amazed audience he vanishes.

Back in 1917, and reunited with Biggles, he helps him fly another mission to get proof of the weapon. They succeed, but on the return are locked in a frantic dogfight through the forests of France with Colonel von Stalhein. When von Stalhein flies off Jim thinks they are safe, but once again the weapon is turned on them. Biggles manages to outfly its deadly pulsing blast and hands Jim the photographic plate for safe keeping, just before the young American is catapulted back through time. If the business people were amazed by his disappearance, they're doubly shocked by his reappearance, muddy and battle scarred.

Jim runs. He must take the first flight to London, to 1a Tower Bridge, the address on the old man's card. He is expected and the man is none other than Colonel Raymond, Biggles' old commanding officer.

Jim is now ready to accept the Colonel's tale of time warps and the bond that makes him and Biggles 'time twins'. Whenever one or the other is in mortal danger they will fall through a hole in the fabric of time, to come to the other's aid. If Jim does not help Biggles then the course of the war will be very different; the Germans will perfect their death ray. So Jim is booked into a neighbouring hotel, to wait for the next time slip.

Meanwhile, Jim's girlfriend, Debbie, and fat, jelly-bean munching business partner, Chuck, are hot in pursuit of their friend who, to put it mildly, they think must have gone round the twist. But before they can arrive at the hotel, Jim is snatched from his bath and dumped into the middle of a convent, clad in only a towel! There he encounters Biggles' three chums and flying companions, Algy, Bertie and Ginger. Having been clad in a spare habit, Jim is able to prove his worth once again, but his reappearance in his hotel dressed as a nun, just as Debbie and Chuck crash through the door, does little to convince them of his sanity.

The pace hots up. Chuck calls for the police who literally lay siege to the hotel when they see Jim's gun. But Debbie stays by his side — too close, in fact, as she is carried back through time with him. The weapon, a sonic device, is located and a fight through a cave system ensues. Then it's time to turn the tables and transport Biggles to the present and the middle of a major police alert. But using cunning, our two heroes succeed in capturing a police helicopter. Could it be that flying it back through time will give them the advantage they need to destroy the weapon?

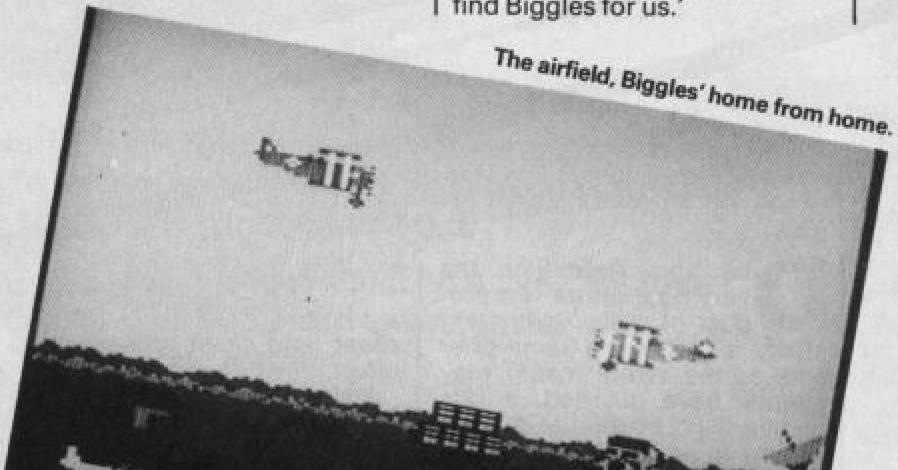
You'll have to see the film to answer that one, and despite my feelings that it would have been far better if they'd stuck to the original books and not tried to do a 'Back to the Future' job on them, it's undeniably fun, with lots of tongue in cheek humour. Neil Dickson, in the title role, is excellent, with an upper lip so stiff it almost cracks when he smiles, and his trio of chums, played by James Saxon, Michael Siberry and Daniel Flynn provide nice support. Alex Hyde White as Jim is energetic and manages to minimise much of the culture shock that comes from seeing a Yank in such a true Brit situation.

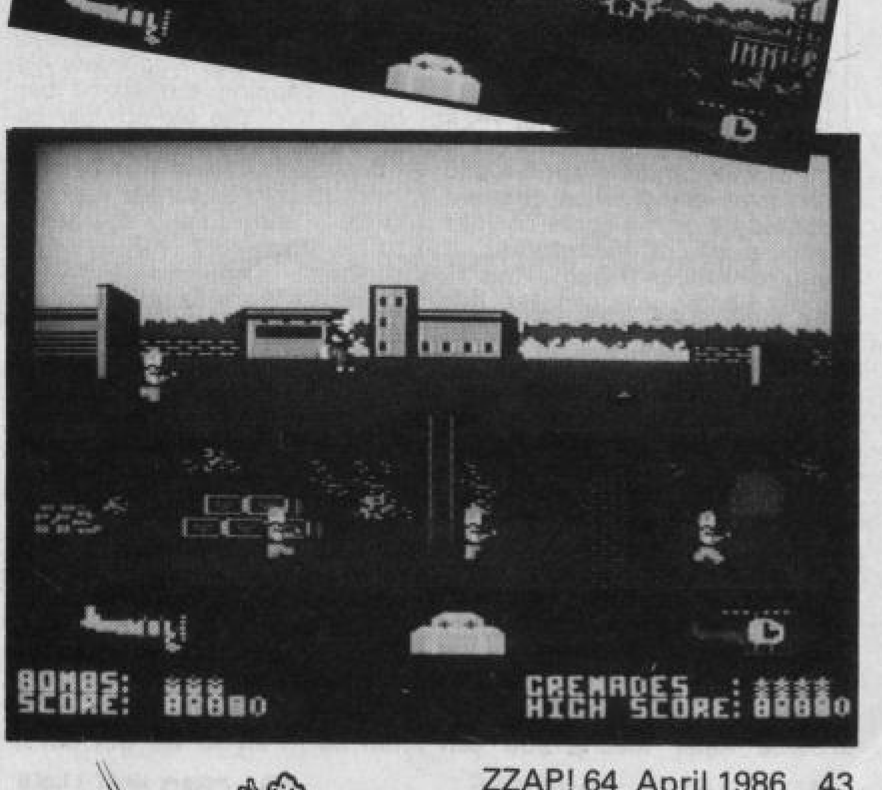
The other way of answering the question of Biggles' success is to take a hand in it yourself via the reason we were there — the game. This comes in two parts, the first being the initial dogfight with von Stalhein, the pursuit through the caves and the rooftop chase in modern day London. Though none of these sections was completed at the time of the preview, they'll all call for different arcade skills and looked good from the screens I saw. Succeed in these and you'll have a chance to fly the police chopper and take on the deadly sonic weapon itself in a cockpit view game.

In fact, because of a neat time warp negotiated by Mirrorsoft, you'll have a chance to do all of these things even before Biggles does, because Biggles the game will be available on the 1st May, three weeks before Biggles the film receives its Royal Premiere. It will cost £9.95 on cassette and £12.95 on disk — a small price to pay to save the world from those fiendish sausage munchers.

So there I was, sitting happily at home, when the call came through. 'Hi John. Roger here. Got a bit of a problem. Want you to scout around. See if you can find Biggles for us.'

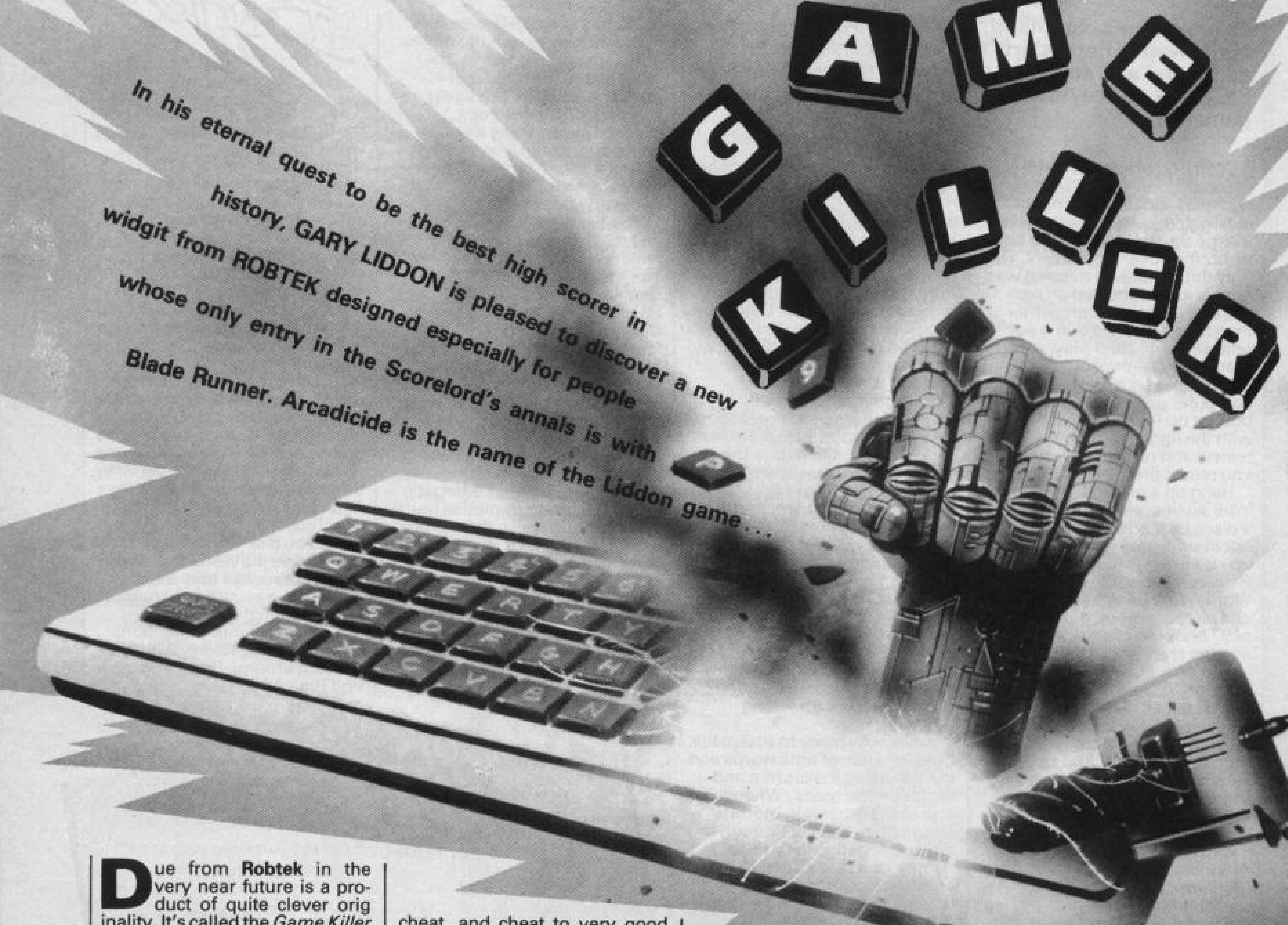
The airfield, Biggles' home from home.





GAME KILLER

In his eternal quest to be the best high scorer in history, GARY LIDDON is pleased to discover a new widgit from ROBTEK designed especially for people whose only entry in the Scorelord's annals is with Blade Runner. Arcadicide is the name of the Liddon game . . .



Due from **Robtek** in the very near future is a product of quite clever originality. It's called the *Game Killer* and, as the astute reader may already have guessed, it kills games. A little explanation may well be in order. Most progs on the Commodore 64 use the special facility of sprites provided by the VIC II chip, sprites are mainly used for mobile objects in the playing screen. The VIC II chip is a clever old stick when it comes to handling sprites and can even detect when different sprites hit or if a sprite collides into a bit of background. If you're writing a game this is most handy, you can see if a spaceship has crashed into an alien, if a missile has hit true or Pacman has trundled into a ghost.

Game Killer is a cartridge and once installed it allows the user to electronically poke VIC in the eye and blind it from seeing any sprite-to-sprite or sprite-to-background collisions. So when a game program says to VIC 'Oi, has the player collided with anything?' the VIC II says 'uh . . . um . . . NO' because it can't see. The potential is quite large because with most commercial software *Game Killer* means you can cheat, and cheat to very good effect.

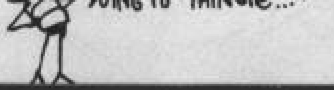
Using *Game Killer* is really quite easy peasy. Powering up with the cartridge in-port, a title screen, replete with Rob Hubbard soundtrack, pops into view. This is just to let you know it's there. Tapping the space bar brings back the old familiar 64 blue on blue start up screen and now you load in the game you want murdered as per normal. Once in and running, the game to be terminated with extreme prejudice is zzapped once your finger finds the small reset button on the side of the cartridge. There are four different modes of operation: **1)** Just push the button and the sprite-to-sprite and sprite-to-background collisions are disabled; **2)** Press the button with joystick pushed forwards and only sprite-to-sprite collisions are ignored; **3)** With the joystick pulled back *Game Killer* disables sprite-to-background contacts; and finally **4)** Pushing the button with fire held down puts the program back to normal mode.

This seemed like good clean fun all in all so we got out a selection of past games and tried out the practice of the theory. The way in which *Game Killer* works is adequately demonstrated with two quite different sorts of shoot em up. It helps to have a bit of a knowledge about how the game is working then it's quite easy to predict the effects, if any, it will have on the program in question. First to be tried was the ZZAP! office all time fave, *Guardian* from Alligata. After giving a quick prod on the game killing button it was great. This changed the prog so that all the attacking aliens and bullets could be sailed through in safety but the aliens could still be shot.

After annihilating *Guardian*, *Dropzone* was loaded up. This turned out to be a bit strange. It was possible to fly past and through any attacking nasties but on the other hand it was impossible to pick up the scientists. When trying to re—enable the sprite—background collisions *Dropzone* wouldn't have any of it and happily insisted on letting the little jetman sail through any attacking foe. Since the scientists couldn't be carried off to the silo it was impossible to finish the sheet we were currently playing. Still a lot of fun though.

Overall *Game Killer* seems to me to be a very good idea indeed. Though it doesn't work with quite a few of the very latest releases the ones with which it does click work very well indeed. One of the best aspects of *Game Killer*, however, is it's ability to revamp life into seemingly long dead titles, it actually makes quite dull games fun and at only £14.95 you can't really go wrong.

Game Killer will be available from ROBTEK LTD (formerly known as Robcom), 36 Market Place, Falloden Way, London NW11 6JP. Telephone 01 209 0188.



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SUPERSTAR

A CLASH OF TITANS

I was tucked comfortably in my hyper-vibrosensory synaptic massage couch sipping some ancient Earthly viticulture obscurely named called Pipistrel 56 given to me by an ancient white haired being who lives in a cave (a pleasant if slightly flinty flavoured brew) while watching the fictional antics of an old pet of mine on the vidscreen (it was from an Earth transmission, an entertainment called *Alien*) and delicately imagining that it was the ZZAP! crew being eviscerated rather than the aptly named Mr Hurt, when the commsole blurted out the message and halted my massage.

It was the puny mohican, Penn contacting me, bubbling with puerile excitement about some super challenge they had arranged without my knowing. He babbled on something about the 'cream of 64 programmers all coming to Ludlow to undertake a great games challenge.' This struck me as being fanciful, to say the least, since even my Cosmic Ultra-Remotivator and non-Terran Behemoth Universal Navigational System (C.U.R.A.N.T.B.U.N.S.) has difficulty in locating this backwoods hamlet, and knowing the prediliction prima donna programmers have for toxic drink, sleep and missing your primitive inter-city rail transports, I was certain Penn had finally taken leave of his already febrile senses.

Still, a challenge is a challenge, and who knows, porcine substitute might fly. Two *cosms* later and my craft was parked in geostationary orbit over Ludlow and I beamed down. To my surprise, Penn had not fibbed. Indeed, there were present no less than five of the young men responsible for some of the best arcade games on the Commodore 64 machine. I felt mildly smug, however, to discover that two of them, a being called Jeff Minter and another referred to as Tony Crowther, had managed to miss a train and phoned asking what they should do. With the extraordinary presence of mind that characterises everything he fails in, the idiot-savant Liddon suggested that they catch the next one. This gloriously simple idea obviously worked, for there they were, the tall, hairy being attired in a curious animal garment finished with fluffy white edges. Was this the infamous Llama skin?

For this extraordinary challenge, I commanded all the ZZAP! minions, pernicious Penn, ruinous Rignall and lousy Liddon to take notes for my benefit. A table had been set ready for the contest, but as a limited number of machines were available, the challengers played in small groups of two or three at a time. The arrangement was that each programmer should command the others to battle it out on a game they had written (the responsible programmer sitting out their own game). The choice of games caused some malicious merriment, since it is well known that programmers vilify, even hate, anything not coded by themselves.

Archer Maclean naturally chose *Dropzone* for his challenge. **Tony Crowther** opted for *Black Thunder*, **Chris Butler** for his Z, whilst **Andrew Braybrook** went for *Paradroid*. **Jeff Minter**, removing his noxious animal covering, announced that the others would play *Mama Llama*, a game enshrined in ZZAP! history. After the completion of these five games, all participants would compete on a choice made by the ZZAP! team — a game not written by any of the august gentlemen present was chosen, Paul Woakes' *Encounter* from Novagen.

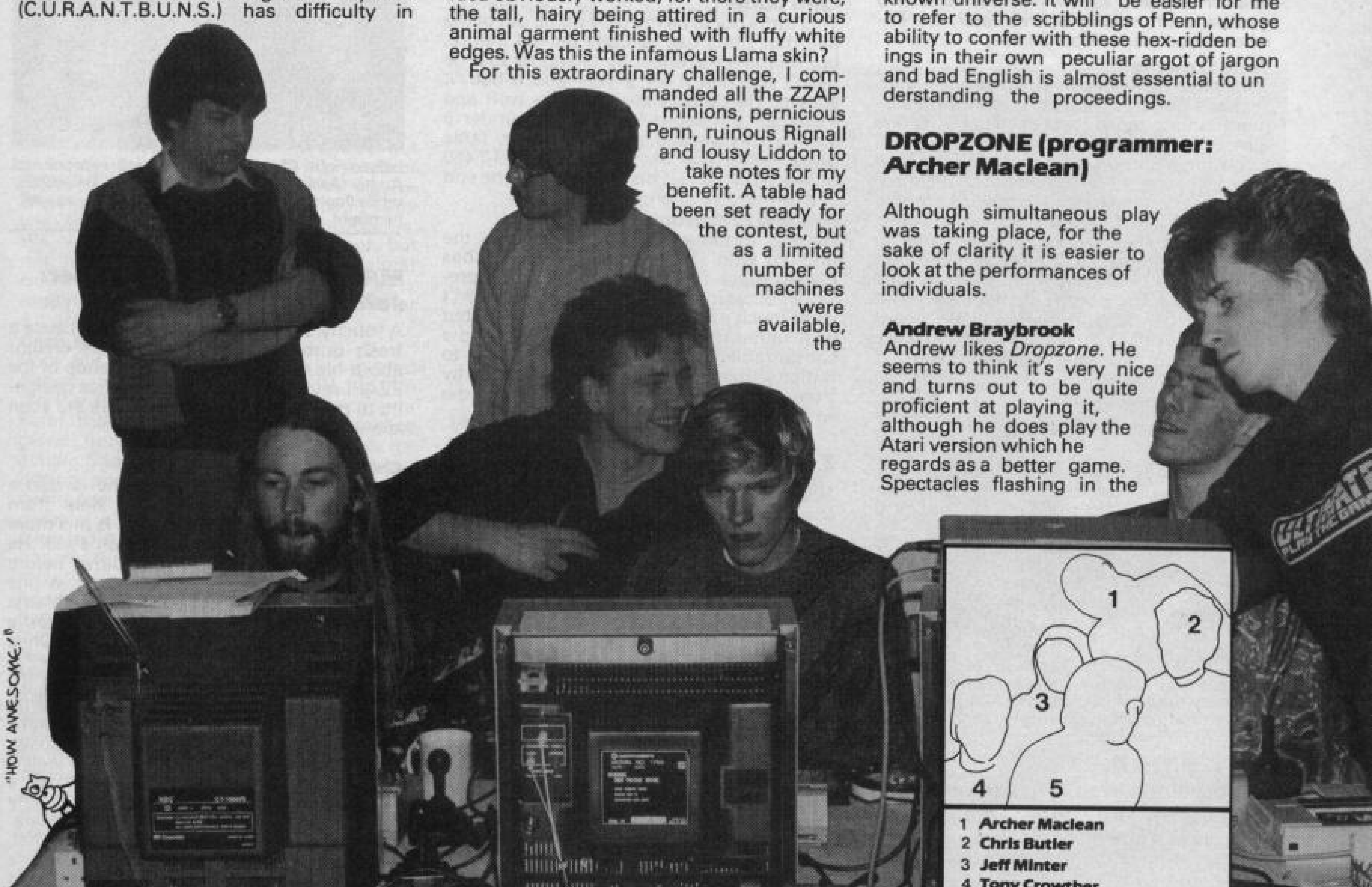
As you may imagine, with so much potentially explosive ego in the air, it took some time to settle everyone down to dis cover who among them should be regard ed as the best arcade game player in the known universe. It will be easier for me to refer to the scribblings of Penn, whose ability to confer with these hex-ridden be ings in their own peculiar argot of jargon and bad English is almost essential to un derstanding the proceedings.

DROPZONE (programmer: Archer Maclean)

Although simultaneous play was taking place, for the sake of clarity it is easier to look at the performances of individuals.

Andrew Braybrook

Andrew likes *Dropzone*. He seems to think it's very nice and turns out to be quite proficient at playing it, although he does play the Atari version which he regards as a better game. Spectacles flashing in the



Programming ego abounds! Left to right: ZZAP! Strategian Sean Masterson, (standing) Archer Maclean and Andrew Braybrook comparing code, (seated) Jeff Minter and Tony Crowther with Gary Penn between them, and Chris Butler joins in the joke, partly obscured by Julian Rignall — where's Liddon?

1 Archer Maclean
2 Chris Butler
3 Jeff Minter
4 Tony Crowther
5 Andrew Braybrook

Black and white photgraphs by Cameron Pound, colour by Roger Kean

CHALLENGE

cruel arc lights of photographers Cameron Pound and Roger Kean, he starts reasonably well, losing only a few lives within the first five minutes. Towards the end of the allotted time limit Mr Braybrook shows his flair for strategical decisions and strata bombs everything in sight for extra points. He finally notches up an impressive 125,510 points with relative ease before sitting back, hands behind head and a smug glint in the lenses he uses to enhance his sight.

Jeff Minter
Another fan of *Dropzone* is our Jeff. He only requires a quick warm up game before getting straight down to business. The calm profile offers a faint Mona Lisa smile as with supreme confidence he spends only ten minutes amassing a nifty 104,620 points.

Chris Butler
With Chris, we come to a novice. Having never seen *Dropzone* before, let alone played it, Mr Butler is definitely at a slight disadvantage. He is given a brief explanation and, after what he calls 'sufficient practice', feels felt confident enough to give it a go. His first game lasts only a minute in which time he manages to score 3380. Oh dear. However, seven minutes and two gradually improving scores later, he finishes with a respectable 28,850.

Tony Crowther
Tony hasn't seen or played *Dropzone* either. Archer's game is causing some embarassment among these joystick experts! A few disastrous practice games later he decides to go for it and promptly displays his naivity by losing a life after only 17 seconds. Does that handsome curl to the lips droop a touch? Through four more games he fails to improve significantly, during which time he scores a meagre 1,930 and goes through two bouts of anti-space (not nice). Finally showing some backbone, he pulls back with some deft play to end up with a final score of 12,440, leaving Chris Butler feeling very relieved, and everyone looking forward to the next challenge.



Oh wow, man! This is too much! Minter fluffs a simple joystick manoeuvre on BLACK THUNDER, while Tony Crowther prepares to lick the screen.

BLACK THUNDER (Programmer: Tony Crowther)

As Tony sits back, licking his wounds, to take his turn out, Archer Maclean steps into the hot seat for the first time. How will he fare?

Archer Maclean
Tit for tat! Maclean has never played *Black Thunder* before, but exhibiting great calmness and a laid back posture before the mighty screen he manages to score 7,750 in practice. However, under the pressure of a time limit his performance slips badly through seven games before he excels himself with a score of 16,690 in his eighth game.

Jeff Minter
With the Hairy Yak *Black Thunder* goes down like a lead balloon — not a load of Led Zeppelin. Sadly the ZZAP! music collection doesn't stretch to any sufficiently dirigible hot air sounds that Jeff might get off on, and as a result two and half minutes of frantic blasting later he has scored 14,890, not a

SUPERSTAR CHALLENGE

The following games make up the challenge

DROPZONE
Best score after ten minutes of play.

BLACK THUNDER
Best score after ten minutes of play.

Z
Best score after ten minutes of play.

MAMA LLAMA
Highest CF (Completion Factor) after fifteen minutes of play.

PARADROID
Best score after fifteen minutes of play.

ENCOUNTER
Best score after ten minutes of play.
Points are awarded to each player in each game, first receiving 5 points, second 4, third 3, fourth 2, and (in *Encounter*) the last getting 1 point. From this a final table is made up to decide who is the overall winner.

bad start however. But it is his third game that proves most profitable as the Daily Llama achieves a mammoth (no relation) 17,130.

Chris Butler
This turns out to be the only game out of the five that Chris has actually played before, but he ruins the effect by telling us that he hasn't touched it for a year and a half. It shows! He doesn't start off too well and manages a meagre 6,080 in just under a minute. His second game however, fares much better and Mr Butler scores 16,450 points. In fact this is his best score at the end of a further five attempts.

Andrew Braybrook
Glasses flashing, Andrew approaches the podium with some experience — he has played *Black Thunder* on a couple of previous occasions and decides he doesn't need much practice. Here too, it shows, but with rather different effect. He clocks up a comfortable first game score of 10,440 to Butler's anguish. This is quickly followed by a commendable 19,390 in his second game which turns out to be his last.

Z (Programmer: Chris Butler)

Now it's Chris' turn to relax at the back with some of the ZZAP! hangers on and spurious journalists who are all taking a great interest in the outcome of this remarkable event.

Tony Crowther
Tony takes his place before the computer, professionally rubbing some chalk over the now slicked joystick handle for a better grip. Although he has never played *Z* before, Tony only has a few practice games before taking on the challenge proper. With a great deal of extremely spawny play he makes it to level two on his first game and after three minutes he ends up with a score of 16,500! He follows this up with many such scores but at the conclusion of his time has to be content with his first.

Andrew Braybrook
Braybrook has played *Z*, but not much, he claims. Starts off very well considering this lack of experience and he doesn't lose a life until he reaches level three — about six and half minutes into the game. Shortly after, he loses another life but gets through to level four. Here inexperience with the ways of *Z* tells, ignorant in the ways of the Control Ship (Fatty), he decides it best to sit around shooting things until his time is up. Andy survives with a score of 65,500, which is in fact his highest to date. Well done, me ol' chum.

Archer Maclean
Another *Z* virgin, Archer gets 44,900 in practice but only manages 23,100 on his first game, which lasts three and a half minutes. The second one goes much better, but he still he can't match that practice score and ends up with 32,200 after a great deal of hassle from Big Mothers. Unfortunately, before he can start another game his time is up. Aah!

Jeff Minter
Mr Minter is something of a *Z* veteran and has been known to reach level eight on a number of occasions. Not surprisingly then, He gets off to a flying start, but runs into trouble on level eight. Then there is a cry — Liddon fills the air with a noxious substance, better known as Pink Floyd's 'Wish You Were Here'. This is more like it, the ZZAP! music library hasn't entirely failed, and with renewed vigour from the injection of mid-heavy metal, he miraculously recovers and makes it through the dark to level nine — his first time (how was it for you, darling)? Ten minutes elapse and he has scored a monumental 204,400. Never a content man, he carries on to score a mega 270,300 — his new high score! What a satisfactory state of events for us to move onto the next game, by none other than the man himself . . .



Left to right: Chris Butler, Andrew Braybrook and Archer Maclean battle it out on BLACK THUNDER, while Jools looks on with amusement — as well he might.

MAMA LLAMA (Programmer: Jeff Minter)

A touchy subject this, and one that cause a fresh outburst of angst from its creator about his mistreatment at the hands of the ZZAP! reviewers. Still, these tactics designed to put off the other challengers are soon silenced as play commences.

Chris Butler
Poor Chris, it transpires that he is also a *Mama Llama* virgin. Despite help from Julian, he doesn't fare too well. Is this more a comment on his play or Julian's aid? He manages to complete five squares before losing his first baby llama and then one square later he loses the second. Mama follows her cloven-hooved offspring shortly thereafter and with a final CF of 12, Chris concedes defeat.

Archer Maclean
Archer has never played *Mama Llama* before. He doesn't know if he can — such a modest fellow. Never mind, he's got Julian to help. Oh dear, he's not doing very well is he? It takes seven minutes for him to get a CF of 15 before he cops it. He took too many no-entry signs through the active square. Whoops! You forgot to tell him about that, didn't you Jools!? Oh well, eight minutes left. See if you can fit another game in, if it's not too late! Just as Archer gets into his stride and attains a CF of 12, the sands of time run out. Bong!

Tony Crowther
In contrast to the others, Mr Crowther has played *Mama Llama* before. Being a close friend of Minter helps, for he receives a little help from Jeff — unfair, considering the others only got Julian. He ends up with a CF of 24 . . . And without losing a single llama! Cor!

Andrew Braybrook
Mr Braybrook is no stranger to *Mama Llama* either and even admits to playing it occasionally in the privacy of his own home with a consenting joystick. He does quite well within the confines of ZZAP! Towers too, obtaining a hassle-free CF of 24 and relin-

quishes his seat for the next game, meniscuses glinting wickedly, for his game is the next one up.

PARADROID (Programmer: Andrew Braybrook)

This game certainly caused a stir among the ZZAP! team, so there was some anticipatory rubbing of hands at the reactions from the gathered programming fraternity. First victim please!

Tony Crowther
Never seen or played *Paradroid*, Tony requires a quick demonstration and explanation — it isn't an easy game to explain either! He opts for two quick practice games before taking the proverbial bull yak by the horns. It takes just under two minutes for his first game and around 30 seconds for his second, due to failing a transfer to a more powerful droid. His third game is better and five minutes later he has two successful transfers behind him and a score of 1,815. But then, unlike lightning (which never strikes in the same place twice), disaster is hurled in his face, again. Yes, Our Tony fails yet another transfer and ends up with a score of 1,785. With six minutes left on the clock he decides to end it there. Not enough time for another game? Bored? Tired? No, he simply wants to go for a drink — in the loo?

Jeff Minter
Mr Minter **has** played *Paradroid* before, but only very briefly. 51 seconds into his first game and it's goodbye Influence Device and no points: 'Oh wow man, I can't cope with this — it's too much!', he proclaims. His second game is an improvement, but not much. He only scores 275 points! However, Jeffrey soon pulls himself back together to finish with a score of 2,255 after a more successful third game.

Chris Butler
Poor old Chris (again). He hadn't played *Paradroid* before either. Lucky (!) for him I'm (Mr Penn) on hand to give him one (a hand that is) and with several practice games under his belt, Mr Butler is ready for action. Sadly, his first game is a shambles, lasting no longer than 30 seconds after failing to transfer to a 296 droid. The second game is a bit more inspiring and the third even more so. Chris manages a successful transfer three times within the space of six minutes and with a great deal of aggression he disposes of enough droids to earn himself 2,300 points. But exhausted with the effort, he gives up shortly thereafter.

Archer Maclean
Me ol' mate has only played *Paradroid* on the day prior to this challenge (research never goes amiss), so he's fully aware of what's required of him. In practice he scores an impressive 5,000 points, but before he knows it Mr Rignall pushes him into playing a timed game, much to Archer's disgust. On attempting to transfer for the third time, he fails and with only 500 points to his name, embarks upon a second game. This runs more smoothly, but not as well as his third and final game in which he achieves 1,555 points. He is later heard to mumble 'I should have a Rignall ear-bending bonus as compensation'...

ENCOUNTER

And so we come to the final game in this Superstar Challenge, the Paul Woakes classic from Novagen. What will it produce?

Archer Maclean
One of Archer's favourite games this. However, he hasn't played it for some time. One practice game soon gets him suitably warmed up and with deft precision he score exactly 30,000 in ten minutes. Fantastic, no trouble, relax Archer.



Jeff Minter
Another fan — and it shows. Jeff comfortably blasts his way through to the fourth level and attains yet another elephantine score. Ten minutes proves to be long enough for him to get 46,600 points. Wow! Heavy!

Tony Crowther
Never played it before but it doesn't stop an old pro like him, fresh hairstyle and all, from reaching level three and scoring 34,800 points with relatively few problems. So that's Tony past the chequered flag.

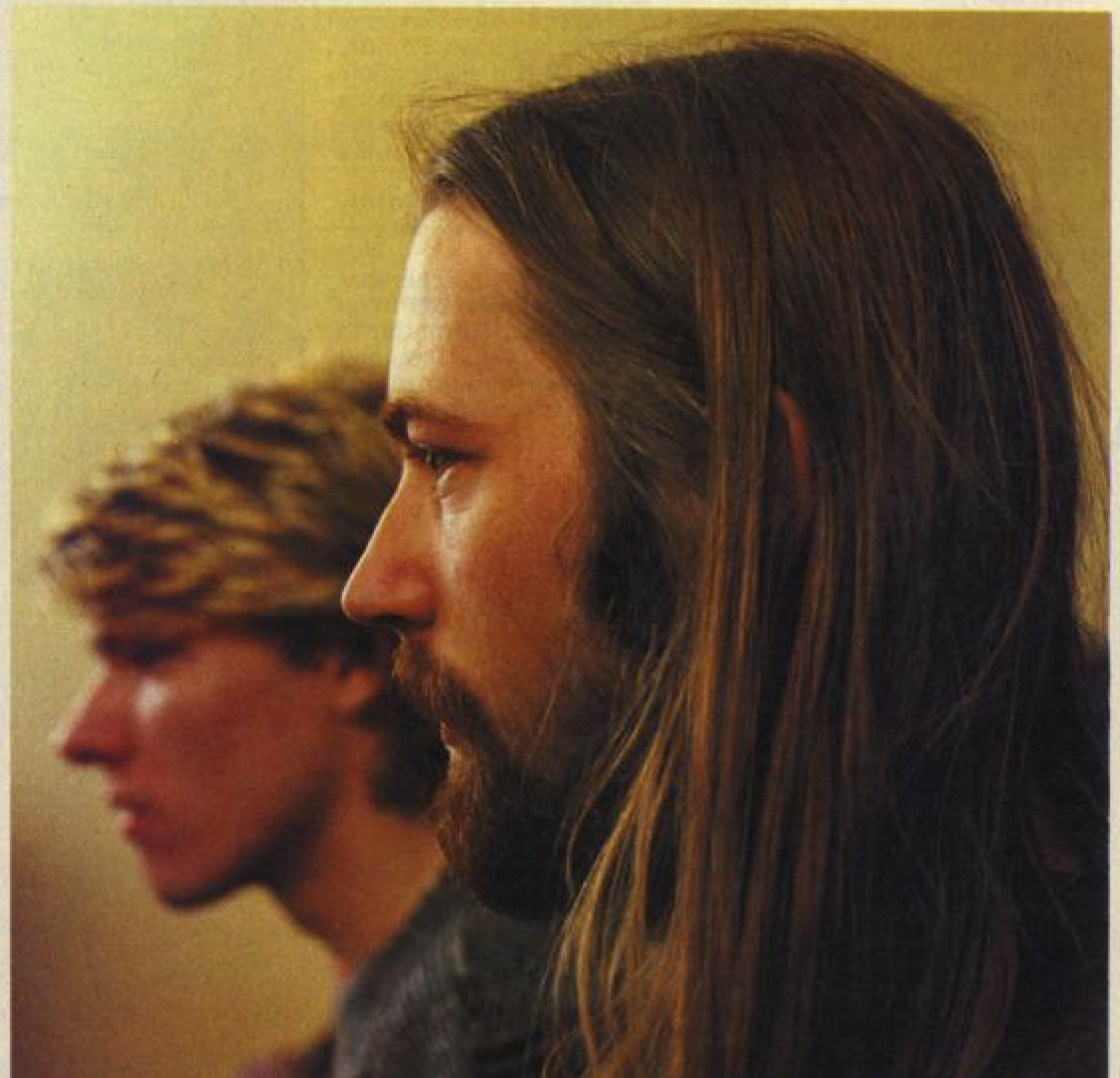
Chris Butler
Believe it or not, but Chris has never played *Encounter*. Is there anything this guy has played before? His first game lasts a mere few minutes and he only scores 3,800. Oh dear, oh dear. However, displaying the kind of tenacity we all associate with people from Sheffield, he doesn't allow this to faze him and with grim determination he gets through to level two — and then, just before the klaxon sounds to indicate time up, he loses his last life with a final score of 11,600. Well done Chris! And so to the last contestant...

Andrew Braybrook
Like Chris, this is the first time Braybrook has seen *Encounter*. He reads through the instructions, practises a bit and then tackles the game admirably. Despite copious enemy attacks he goes on to score 20,900 and appears sufficiently pleased with his performance, as well he might.

IN CONCLUSION

And thus, cuffing Penn over his left auditory orifice, I collected the notes and returned by beam to the comfort of my craft, away from the chaotic bustle of infantile human endeavour, there to study the results at my leisure.

Next month, I hope matters will have returned to a more normal situation (if such a state of affairs is possible with homo sapiens) with a mortal challenger to take on the chosen of the ZZAP! team. Til then, I bid you an awesome farewell.



Supreme confidence and an encyclopaedic knowledge of heavy metal music proves the winning combination for ZZAP! SUPERSTAR CHAMPION Jeff Minter. (Tough luck Tony).

THE ZZAP! SUPERSTAR CHALLENGE RESULTS!

Puny Earthlings, regard these scores and tremble, for they are those of your games masters. The one named JEFF MINTER is the overall winner, closely followed by the being named ANDREW BRAYBROOK.

	ANDREW BRAYBROOK	ARCHER MACLEAN	CHRIS BUTLER	JEFF MINTER	TONY CROWTHER
PARADROID	—	1,555 (2)	2,300 (5)	2,255 (4)	1,785 (3)
DROPZONE	125,510 (5)	—	28,850 (3)	104,620 (4)	12,440 (2)
Z	65,500 (4)	32,600 (3)	—	204,400 (5)	16,500 (2)
MAMA LLAMA	24 (5)	17 (2)	19 (3)	—	24 (5)
BLACK THUNDER	19,390 (5)	16,690 (3)	16,450 (2)	17,130 (4)	—
ENCOUNTER	20,900 (2)	30,000 (3)	11,600 (1)	46, 600 (5)	34,800 (4)
FINAL SCORE	**21**	**13**	**14**	**22**	**16**

THE SCORELORD SPEAKETH



Greetings mortals! This month has brought much-needed stimulation and change to my section. Not content with bringing you a star-studded challenge, I have decided to inject new blood into the score tables. Now, far more video warriors will be given the acclaim they deserve. Every month the highscore tables will be flushed clean allowing new super-scorers to be included . . . and it's not just the top three either. Oh no, all scores worthy of credit will be included, no matter how many!

In my scorelord section in issue ten I reported that a score of 8,175 on *Monty on the Run* had been sent in by **Julian S Smith**. This is, of course, impossible and I demanded an explanation. Fearing my mighty wrath the human involved speedily sent me a letter explaining that it was his brother who had made up the score and sent it in under his name. Well, whoever you are brother Smith my minions have been sent . . .

Congratulations are in order: **Mark Tortolano** is the first of my heroic troops to solve the excellent *Koronis Rift*! Well done — but what about *The Eidolon*?

Ian Gayle who hails from London SE9 is a very lucky person! He has a version of *Ballblazer* which has a level ten droid!! You see, he has written to me claiming that he shut out a droid ten in three minutes. Perhaps an explanation is in order? I wouldn't like to think that my troops were missing out on an extra droid.

That is all for this month. Next month I expect twice as many scores. I shall be waiting.

ACE (Cascade)
32,250 Mark Farrington, Blythebridge, Staffs
18,910 Kevin Hemsley, Deal, Kent
18,650 Gareth Johnston, Denny, Scotland
16,300 Oliver Carruthers, East Sheen, London
10,025 Lee and Paul Schofield, Uckfield, Essex
9,720 Philip Cheshire, Rotherham, S Yorks

BATALYX (Ariolasoft)
18,860,620 Brendan Bird, Glasgow
17,545,000 Guy Mclaren, Meopham, Kent
7,235,101 Steve Dallett, Kingshurst, Birmingham

BOUNDER (Gremlin Graphics)
1,445,209 Michael Akhtar, Thornton Heath, Surrey
1,123,782 James Thomas, Leicester
787,027 Guy Olliver, Plymstock, Plymouth
617,731 Kevin Green, Hornsey, London

BALLBLAZER (Activision)
Shut out level 9 droids:
26 secs Justin Balchin, Godalming, Surrey
29 secs Andrew Butcher, Dunmow, Essex
34 secs Robert Hunt, Bradford, W Yorks
46 secs Arlo Swinson, Doncaster, S Yorks
59 secs Wing Chung, Cardiff
1:00 secs W K Tsang, Hednesford, Staffs
1:01 secs Jason Abbot, Leek, Staffs
2:40 secs Robbie Graham, Blairgowrie, Perthshire

BEACH HEAD II (US Gold)
1,933,800 Paul Harper, Bognor Regis, W Sussex
1,722,000 Bradley Cole, Downend, Bristol
1,257,100 Stuart Murray, Chelmsford, Essex

CHUCKIE EGG (A 'N' F)
520,450 Wenchin, London, NW9
381,120 Gary Liddon, ZZAP!

CHIMERA (Firebird)
6,201 Michael Ager, Middleton, Manchester
4,188 Mark Lieth, Norwich, Norfolk

CRAZY COMETS (Martech)
218,517 Mark Thompson, Sheffield
202,931 Dan Shannon, Bootham, York
184,307 Stephen Pillington, Blackpool, Lancs
106,384 Craig Lester, Prestwood, Bucks
105,534 Gary Ellis, Dundee
33,154 John Balcerzak, Chard, Somerset

COMMANDO (Elite)
13,755,100 Thomas Lund-Hansen, 5290 Marslev, Denmark
11,444,800 Emlyn Jones, Whipton, Devon
8,000,200 Philip Eames, Rochester, Kent
7,351,100 Stuart Marsh, Lewisham, London
6,190,600 John Walden, Peterborough, Cambs

DRAGONSKULLE (Ultimate)
83,230 Lee Barklam, Bridgnorth, Shrops
81,570 Bernard Blake, Bamber Bridge, Preston
78,990 Colin May, Hollesley, Suffolk

THE EIDOLON (Activision)
124,480 Gary Penn, ZZAP!

FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD (Ocean)
87,000 Stephen Mainwaring, Stoke on Trent, Staffs
87,000 M Smith, Cheltenham, Glos

HYPERSPORTS (Imagine)
198,942 Craig Austin, Cwmbran, Gwent
191,626 Matthew Rickard, Maidstone, Kent
178,512 Chris Burns, Oldham, Lancs

HERO (Activision)
1,000,000 Tim Hunter, Rochdale, Lancs

THE GOONIES (US Gold)
269,090 Anthony Lyne, Brighton, Sussex
139,320 Shaun Cartledge, Chesterfield, Derby

KUNG FU MASTER (US Gold)
491,137 Mark Goodwin, Rhondda, Mid Glams
309,923 Colin Mciver, Inchture, Perthshire
216,817 Andrew Wood, Church End, Essex
187,805 Stephen Parker, Waterlooville, Hants
122,170 D E Mummery, St Albans, Herts
102,406 Gary McTaggart, London, W1N 3FB

KORONIS RIFT (Activsion)
157,040 K C Panty, Burton on Trent
128,780 Mark Tortolano, Stirling, Scotland
15,390 Paul Want, Harrogate, N Yorks
10,420 Gary Hill, Preston, Lancs
8,760 Chris Alton, Chesterfield, Derbyshire
6,140 Andrew Wood, Church End, Essex
3,950 Mark Leith, Norwich, Norfolk

KANE (Mastertronic)
100,974 Stuart A'hara, Dundee, Tayside
52,153 Andrew Smith, Dyce, Aberdeen
48,735 Darren Wood, Coventry

LAW OF THE WEST (US Gold)
4,205 Gary Penn, ZZAP!
3,116 Julian Rignall, ZZAP!

MERCENARY (Novagen)
1,409,000cr Garry Fraser, Invervrie, Scotland
1,169,000cr James Duffy, Coventry
1,000,000cr Paul Timlin, Glasgow
474,000cr Jeff Bradford, Swanwick, Derbyshire
464,700cr Jason Roberts, Crosby, Liverpool

PARADROID (Hewson Consultants)
113,445 John Doyle, Kilmarnoch, Ayrshire
102,110 Andrew Johnson, Pudsey, W Yorks
100,125 Paul Harper, Bognor Regis, W Sussex
92,020 Peter Williams, Preston, Lancs
88,000 Jason Jay, Fairlight, E Sussex
87,340 Kinnon Paterson, M'Bro, Cleveland
66,310 Mark Leith, Norwich, Norfolk

REVS (Firebird)
1:26.3 Darren Hunt, Retford, Notts
1:26.4 Dean Ryan, Southampton
1:26.9 Gary Mahood, Banbridge, Co Down
1:32.6 Silverstone W K Tsang, Hednesford, Staffs
1:35.0 Silverstone Dan Williams, London, W1H 1RS

ROBIN OF THE WOOD (Odin)
99 overall M Fearon, Ollerton, Notts
98 overall Peter Roche, London, E2 OJE
92 overall Peter Williams, Preston, Lancs
88 overall Chris Alton, Chesterfield, Derbyshire
85 overall Stephen Simpson, Otley, W Yorks

ROCK 'N' WRESTLE (Melbourne House)
84,000 Kevin Murphy, Kirkaldy, Fife
83,500 Andrew Christie, Haywards Heath, W Sussex
70,000 Dick Andrews, Epsom, Surrey
21,300 Mat Rickard, Maidstone, Kent

RESCUE ON FRACTALUS (Activision)
333,480 Nicholas West, Basildon, Essex
277,312 Stephen Sherlock, Wirral, Merseyside

RAMBO (Ocean)
4,108,100 Kevin Bassim, London SW1
1,708,700 Adrian Hipkiss, Lye, W Mids
1,275,300 James Crow, Kineton, Warks
1,113,000 Sean Barnett, Chesterfield, Derbyshire
927,900 Mark Stevens, Preston, Lancs
673,500 Paul Clarke, Thornbury, Bristol

SCARABAEUS (Ariolasoft)
81,000 Dean Ryan, Southampton
64,677 Adam Turvey, Sidcup, Kent
50,134 Paul Godden, Godalming, Surrey

SKOOLDAZE (Microsphere)
52,170 Alan Belton, Colchester, Essex

TRANSFORMERS (Ocean)
11,352 Danny Kirwin, Liverpool
7,175 Andrew Esson, Bexley, Kent
6,150 Gary Clarke, Southend on Sea, Essex
3,528 Alan Cass, N Harrow, Middx
3,042 Paul Want, Harrogate, N Yorks
2,795 Andrew Smith, Dyce, Aberdeen

WHO DARES WINS II (Alligata)
302,160 Mark Short, Laiston, Suffolk
145,750 Bradley Cole, Downend, Bristol
140,670 Andrew Mount, Maidenhead, Berks
139,330 Neil Driver, Horley, Surrey
76,870 Alan Cass, Harrow, Middx

WIZARDRY (The Edge)
16,600 Jason Jay, Fairlight, E Sussex
15,600 Adrian Hipkiss, Lye, W Mids
14,300 Matthew Ward, Ilford, Essex
8,600 James Field, Milton-under-Wychwood, Oxford

YIE AR KUNG FU (Imagine)
286,900 Julian Rignall, ZZAP!

Z (Rhino)
270,300 Jeffery Minter, Tadley, Hants
155,900 Mark Cobb, Arnold, Notts
127,300 William Wan, Arnold, Notts
121,600 Hemant Patel, Wembley, Middx
112,000 Dan Williams, London, W1H 1RS
99,600 Stuart Marsh, London, SE13 5AP

ZORRO (US Gold)
78,445 David Phillips, Berkhamstead, Herts
71,530 Andrew Smith, Dyce, Aberdeen



All you highscoring girls and boys, send your score(s) unto me. A postcard, letter, sub-etha transmission or the like will do fine. What I want to know is your score, level reached, time taken and any other relevant details to the game (the more the better). Then put your name, address and telephone number (just in case I want to contact you) and send it off to: ZZAP! CHALLENGE, ZZAP! 64, PO BOX10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.

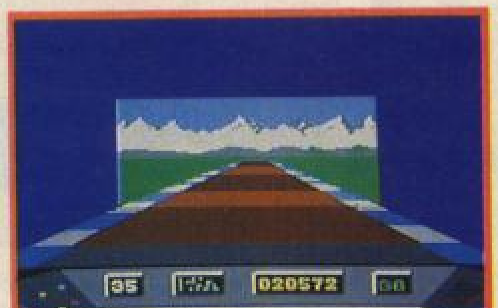
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ZZAP! READERS TOP 30 For APRIL 1986

Here we go with this month's Chart Voting Form winners. Outright winner with all the software is **Ian Lester** from Knutsford, Cheshire. He's closely followed by the runners-up who are: **Martin Borsselle** from Finsbury Park, London; **Andrew Tate** from Dunblane, Perthshire; **James Fitzgerald** of Leeds, and finally but hardly least, **Timothy Jowes** of St Ives, Cambridgeshire.

1 *(1)* **PARADROID** (13%)
HEWSON, £7.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 97%

2 *(2)* **WINTER GAMES** (12%)
US GOLD, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 94%

3 *(3)* **SUMMER GAMES II** (6%)
US GOLD, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 97%

4 *(5)* **LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE** (5%)
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! rating 97%

5 *(7)* **WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST** (4%)
MELBOURNE HOUSE, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 93%

6 *(9)* **PITSTOP II** (3%)
US GOLD, £9.95 disk, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 91%

7 *(16)* **MONTY ON THE RUN** (3%)
GREMLIN GRAPHICS, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 90%

8 *(—)* **BOUNDER** (3%)
GREMLIN GRAPHICS, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 97%

9 *(20)* **MERCENARY** (3%)
NOVAGEN, £9.95 cas, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 98%

10 *(4)* **COMMANDO** (3%)
ELITE, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 77%

11 *(6)* **ELITE**
FIREBIRD, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 92%

12 *(11)* **RAMBO**
OCEAN, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 65%

13 *(15)* **FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD**
OCEAN, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 97%

14 *(24)* **SKYFOX**
ARIOLASOFT, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 91%

15 *(8)* **FIGHT NIGHT**
US GOLD, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 93%

16 *(10)* **WHO DARES WINS II**
ALLIGATA, £7.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 90%

17 *(26)* **ROBIN OF THE WOOD**
ODIN, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 92%

18 *(—)* **THE EIDOLON**
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! rating 97%

19 *(14)* **DROPZONE**
US GOLD, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 95%

20 *(—)* **THING ON A SPRING**
GREMLIN GRAPHICS, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 93%

21 *(12)* **BALLBLAZER**
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! rating 98%

22 *(21)* **SCARABAEUS**
ARIOLASOFT, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 96%

23 *(13)* **KIK START**
MASTERTRONIC, £1.99 cass
ZZAP! rating 90%

24 *(28)* **REVS**
FIREBIRD, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 96%

25 *(19)* **KORONIS RIFT**
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! rating 96%

26 *(22)* **HYPERSPORTS**
IMAGINE, 8.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 91%

27 *(27)* **KARATEKA**
ARIOLASOFT, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 80%

28 *(17)* **NODES OF YESOD**
ODIN, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 95%

29 *(25)* **BARRY MCGUIGAN'S BOXING**
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass
ZZAP! rating 91%

30 *(30)* **FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING**
ELITE, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 69%

YOU COULD WIN SOFTWARE BY VOTING FOR THE ZZAP! READERS TOP 30 CHART!

Every month we give away an amazing **£40 worth of software** to the first person whose ZZAP! READERS TOP 30 VOTING FORM is pulled from the bag. The winner also receives a super ZZAP! 64 T-shirt. Four runners up get a T-shirt and a ZZAP! Cap. So all you have to do is fill out the form below, remembering to put your name and address down, list your five favourite games in descending order (remember they must be released games that you have played), state which software you would like (to a total value of £40) should you win, and your T-shirt size (S,M,L). Then send your form in to the address shown.

ZZAP! 64 TOP 30 VOTING COUPON

(Please write in block capitals)

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

Postcode ....

I am voting for the following five games:

1 ....

2 ....

3 ....

4 ....

5 ....

If I win the £40 worth of software, the games I would like are:
Game (and software house)

My T-shirt size is S/M/L

ZZAP! TOP 30, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

SEE YOUR DREAM

ELECTRIC DREAMS

could make your game idea a reality

It's not that **Electric Dreams** are short of ideas for good Commodore Games. It's just that they reckon that you lot out there, the party of the first part heretofore known as ZZAP! READERS, should be able to assist the party of the second part, the producers of games software heretofore known as ELECTRIC DREAMS.

And in case you were wondering what all this 'party of the first part' stuff is, well . . . contracts are written in this kind of language. The winner of this competition could well find him or herself signing a juicy contract with Electric Dreams which could lead to fame, fortune, a spiky hair-do and groupies!

Locked away in the depths of your mind, there's bound to be a real snazzo idea or concept for a blockbusting Commodore 64 Game. Unleash your imagination, put a bug on your subconscious, invade the privacy of your own mind and dredge up that idea.

By way of gentle inducement, Electric Dreams are going to stump up a monitor and disk drive as the top prize in this game-designing competition. The winner and ten runners up will also collect a copy of Activision's *Game Maker*. But these paltry prizes are mere sops — the main chance lies in getting your game published.

You see, Electric Dreams will be most happy to arrange for a top flight programmer to write your game and even happier to market the finished product. Happier still to cough up a royalty to you, (which is where the contracty bit might come in handy). You could be rich — or at least really rather well off — if your game is produced and catches on.

Obviously, the guys at Electric Dreams can't possibly arrange for every game idea submitted to be put into production. Indeed, they can't guarantee to publish the game idea sent in by the winner. It might not be good enough, you see. They are very keen to publish GOOD games, though, and if they reckon an idea's a good one, they'll do the bizzo.

This is where you come in, and get a chance to prove them wrong. It'd be great if ZZAP! readers could keep Electric Dreams busy for the next zillion years (tee hee). Make sure that your ideas come zooming in to ELECTRIC DREAMING, ZZAP!, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1AQ before June 12th this year. Show Electric Dreams how fertile ZZAP readers' imaginations are . . .

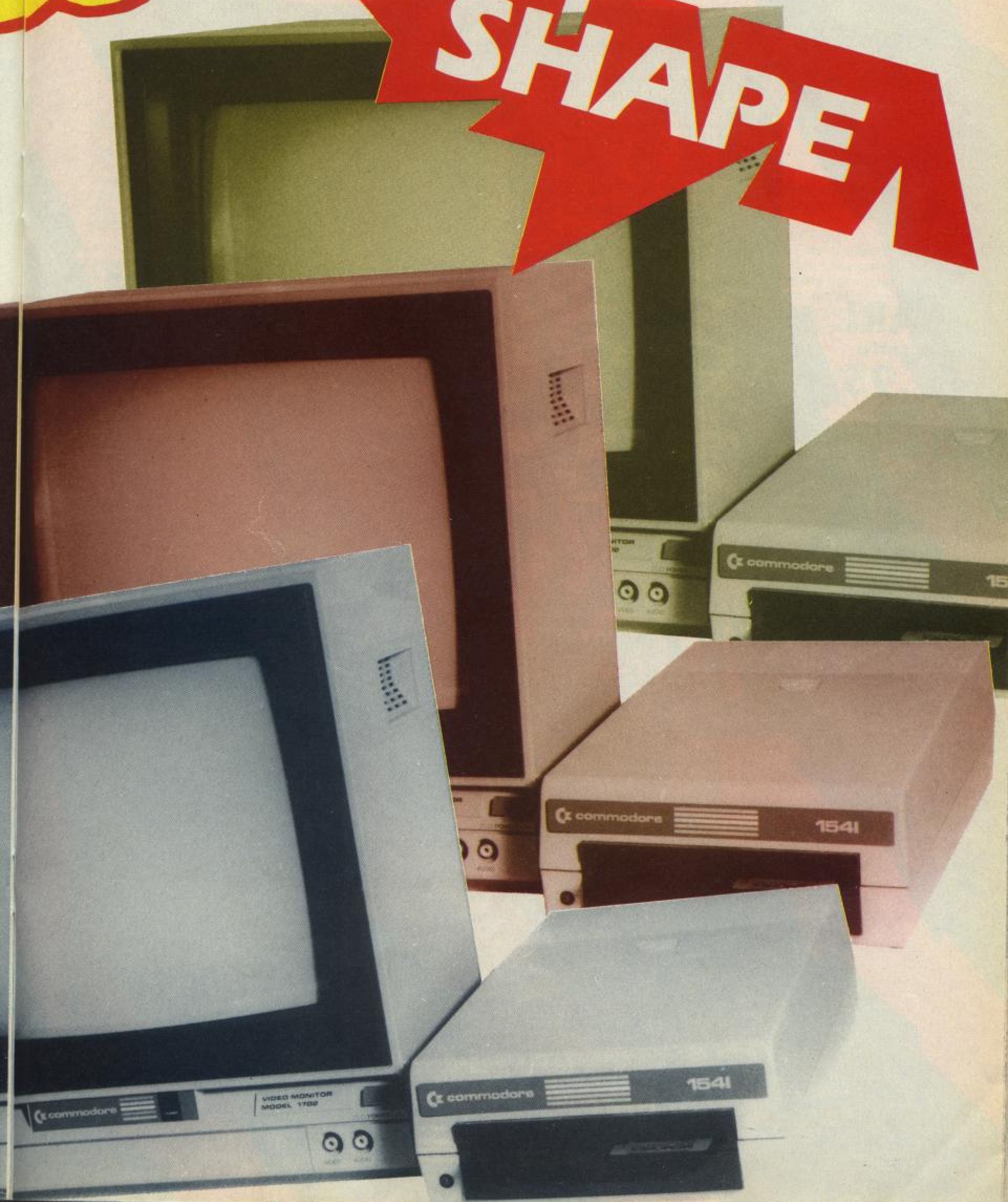
When you are creating your masterpiece, bear in mind the limitations of the Commodore 64 — it's no good designing the Mega Game of a Lifetime that would take a Cray 1 to run and thirteen joysticks to play. Do go into as much detail as you can, however, including a full description of the gameplay and a couple of draft screen designs in your entry. A full storyboard might be nice, but don't go mad and try to write the complete game yourself on the computer. Unless you reckon you can knock up a Top Ten game on your own in the next three months that is!

Oh, one last bit of contracty stuff. We have to insist that all the submitted game ideas become the property of Newsfield Ltd. We're not going to run off with them, it's just that we have to make sure that no-one else muscles in and publishes your idea in the meantime.



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ZZAP! TIPS

Thank you Postie, my good man. Oh goody, a bulging sackful of tips just aching to be sorted — now I can get on with this month's ZZAP! Tips. (RUSTLE) What's this? Ah yes, the *Eidolon* maps for the first three levels along with some hints. Great. (CRUMPLE) *Manic Miner* POKEs!? No, I don't think so. (RUSTLE, RUSTLE) *Quake Minus One* tips! Definitely print those. (SCRUMPLE, RUSTLE) Cor! Look at all these POKEs (DROOL, SLOBBER etc) . . .

QUAKE MINUS ONE (Monolith)

So you want to beat *Quake Minus One*? Well you won't get very far with those instructions, will you? Nooooo. Never mind, here's CR McGibbon **to give you a hand . . .**

Where to start? Oh, alright let's begin with the control method. The best tip I can give here is PRACTICE — long and hard and only resort to the instructions (which are awful) if all else fails.

According to the instructions you can repair the four internal systems at junctions — RUBBISH! Drive up to a factory, activate the bottom right repair icon (the sight will change shape), rotate to face the factory with the bent arrow icon and all systems, including most weapons, will be repaired.

The first few times you play you will find that Hermes gets captured very rapidly. Therefore your first priority should always be to fortify all roads leading to Hermes, except the one directly South of it. The only places your droids have to be are defending Hermes and attacking Ares, which is roughly at the NorthWest corner of the hexagon. Wander around the complex in interrupt mode to find the others — their locations are fairly obvious.

To defend a road, first destroy the control tower so that the enemy droids can't capture it (cunning, eh)? Then drive down the MINES. Use them to take from which an attack is expected. Stop just behind the factory closest to the hostile end. If the droid gets attacked later, simply rotate to face the factory and get 'fixed up' as described earlier. Though strong, this position is not impregnable and an enemy droid can eventually destroy the sonar beacons on the road, vaping your droids without you even knowing about it (aw, shame)!

When Hermes is relatively safe, turn your attention to capturing Ares. The ONLY weapon suitable for destroying enemy installations is the torpedo, as these can be used out of range.

To capture a road, use the following method: Advance very slightly from the junction and stop. Switch to torpedoes and rotate to face any dangerous installations visible in the distance ie rigs, bunkers, magnetrons and conducting columns. When the sight flashes, let off torpedoes until it stops. Repeat until the coast appears clear and advance until you can see the control tower. If there is a conducting column opposite, destroy it, otherwise, switch to ionic blaster (if you haven't got one, retreat and find a droid that has). The rest is in your hands . . .

Here's a brief rundown of the other weapons: out droids quickly, but remember they do run out.
FIREBALLS. Main weapon against droids.
LASER and MISSILES. Useless unless you've got nothing better.

Now that you've captured Ares it looks like capturing the other three installations is going to be well nigh impossible, right? Wrong! Take a look at them in interrupt mode — you will notice that there is at least one droid from your newly captured fleet with an ionic blaster beside them. Coincidence? Pah! Anyhow, this is the most important part of the game. If you blow it, chances are that you won't be able to try again before Hermes gets captured.

Good Luck!

DANGER:

Commodore Health

WARNING:

RESETS CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR 64'S HEALTH.

The following three tips require resets, as do some of the POKEs. I can't say I approve of the use of the 'wire thingy wotsit' to reset the 64 as recommended by Mr Liddon last month, so I wouldn't advise using it unless you know what you're doing.

THE YOUNG ONES (Orpheus)

Load the game, reset your 64 and — well, see what you think. Accident or design? My lips are sealed . . .

ARC OF YESOD (Thor)

Load *Arc of Yesod* as usual and reset your 64 for a message from Odin. I wonder if they mean it?

MONTY ON THE RUN (Gremlin)

Once again, load the game and reset your 64 for a message, this time from Micro Projects. Oh yes, I nearly forgot — the cheat mode. As *Monty on the Run* has been out for some time now, I might as well reveal the cheat mode to the few who don't already know it . .

Simply type in 'I WANT TO CHEAT' on the high score table, start the game and collect the little boat in the bottom left hand corner of the second screen. You will now be invincible.

BOUNDER (Gremlin)

While we're on the subject of cheat modes, how about one for 'the most compulsive game I've ever played'? On the title screen, hold down the following keys for approximately 30 seconds . . . 1, Q, A, Z and SPACE

The border will change colour to indicate that the cheat mode is operative. You will now have infinite balls to play with.

THE EIDOLON (Activision)

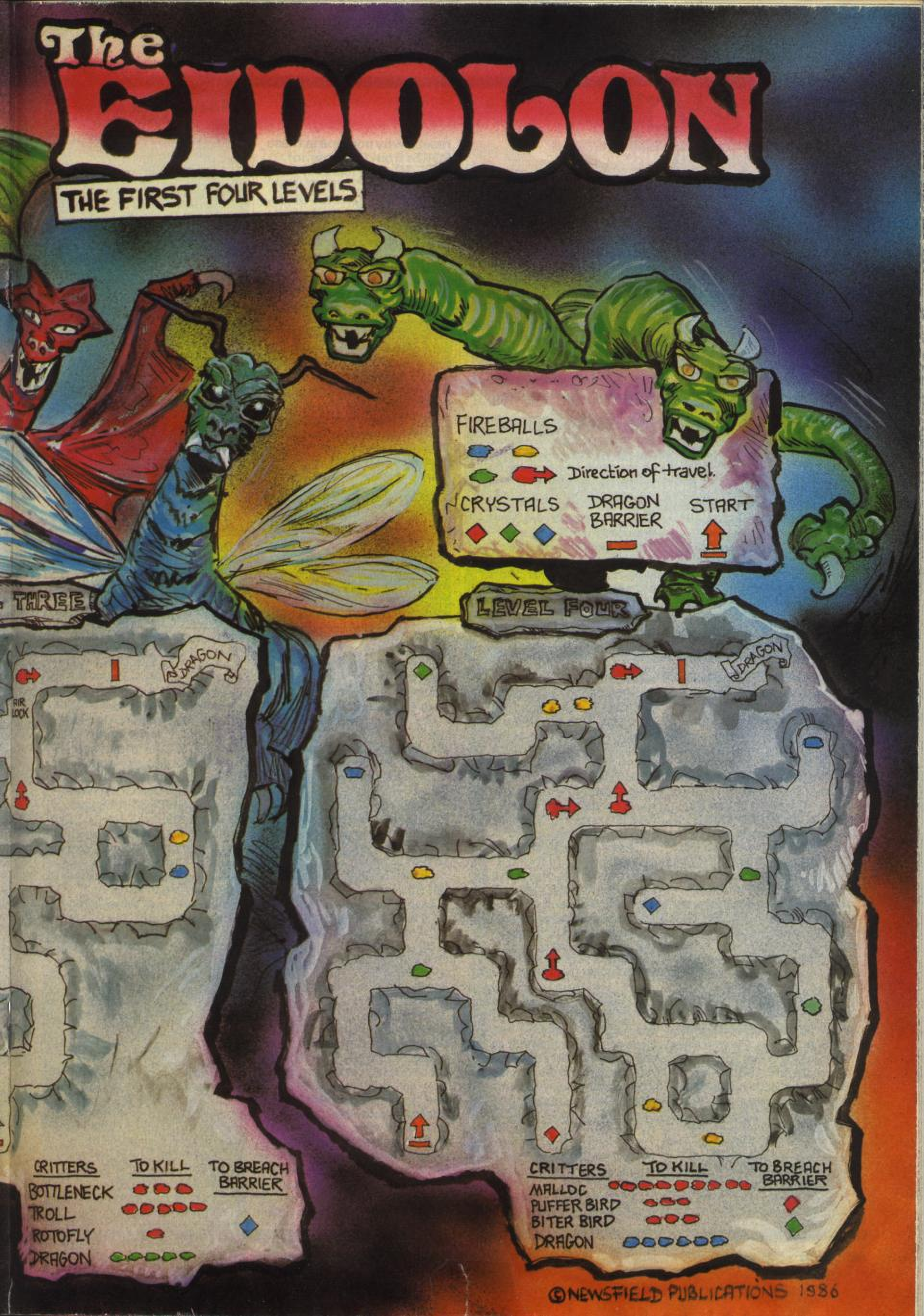
On the following pages there are maps for the first three levels of *The Eidolon*. Use them wisely, my son, for they are the key to your success and ultimately your survival. A couple of quick hints (if you need any help, don't hesitate to ask) . . .

When shooting a dragon, don't shoot off too many fireballs and thus allow your energy to drop too low. On later levels you can collect the fireballs spat at you by the dragons, so keep your hand ready on the space bar. Next month I'll tell you where to find the dragon on level eight (believe it or not, it isn't that difficult) and also how to kill it (now that IS difficult).





LEVEL ONE
DRAGON
AIR LOCK
CRITTERS
TO KILL
TO BREACH BARRIER
ROTOFLY
TROLL
BITERBIRD
DRAGON
LEVEL TWO
DRAGON
AIR LOCK
CRITTERS
TO KILL
TO BREACH BARRIER
BITERBIRD
GREP
ROTOFLY
DRAGON


The EIDOLON
THE FIRST FOUR LEVELS
FIREBALLS
Direction of travel.
CRYSTALS
DRAGON BARRIER
START
THREE
DRAGON
AIR LOCK
CRITTERS
TO KILL
TO BREACH BARRIER
BOTTLENECK
TROLL
ROTOFLY
DRAGON
LEVEL FOUR
DRAGON
CRITTERS
TO KILL
TO BREACH BARRIER
MALLOC
PUFFER BIRD
BITER BIRD
DRAGON
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resets, why not type in these **POKEs from (guess who)** Trolly (Game Hacker II) . . .

```
POKE 28439,234 (RETURN)
POKE 28440,234 (RETURN)
POKE 28441,234 (RETURN)
```

. . . **and then** SYS 26654 (RETURN) **to start. You will now have infinite lives.**

ONE MAN AND HIS DROID (Mastertronic)

Julian Wright **from Honeybourne, Evesham was one of many who sent in all nineteen passwords for this budget beauty. When given the option to enter a password at the beginning of the game, simply type in one of the following to start on a higher level . . .**

BUBBLE	ECTOPLASM	CURRYRICE
COMMODORE	GORGEOUS	COFFEE
FINDERS	SEASIDE	CASSETTE
GENETIC	GIZMO	TELESCOPE
ZAPPED	KINGKONG	COMPUTER
MEGASONIC	HOLOGRAM	EDACRAEDA
TIMEWARP		

HYPER CIRCUIT (Alligata)

Stick your *Hypercircuit* tape in the cassette deck, ensure that it's been rewound to the beginning and type in this listing as supplied by Gary Saunders **of Colchester, Essex . . .**

```
10 FOR A=0 TO 34:READ C:POKE 52224+A,C:NEXT A
20 SYS 52227
30 DATA 76, 174, 2, 169, 1, 170, 168, 32
40 DATA 186, 255, 169, 0, 133, 183, 32, 213
50 DATA 255, 169, 76, 141, 209, 3, 169, 248
60 DATA 141, 210, 3, 169, 252, 141, 211, 3
70 DATA 76, 0, 204
```

Check for errors (we don't want any nasty bugs messing things up, now do we?) and if it looks alright, type RUN (RETURN). **Press play on tape and wait for the game to load. When the 64**

BLACK THUNDER (Quicksilva)

If your name isn't Tim Fraser **and you don't come from Ruislip in Middlesex, then these aren't your *Black Thunder* POKEs. However, if you like the idea of being invincible and you wear luminous green socks, then rewind your *Black Thunder* tape to the beginning and type in the following listing .**

```
1 SYS 63276:PRINT CHR$ (147)
10 POKE 783,1:POKE 830,34 :POKE 832,48:SYS 62828: POKE 53265,PEEK (53265) AND 239
11 FOR I=0 TO 27:READ X:POKE 1280+I,X:NEXT
12 POKE 8941,0:POKE 8942, 5:POKE 8945,76:POKE 8946,0:POKE 8947,5
13 POKE 8950,76:POKE 8951,0:POKE 8952,5:POKE 8953,76:POKE 8954,0:POKE 8955,5
27 FOR K=679 TO 779:POKE K,PEEK (8192+K)
28 A=A+1:IF A=99 THEN 30
29 NEXT
30 POKE 778,PEEK (8192+ 99):POKE 779,PEEK (8192+ 100):STOP
100 DATA 169, 27, 141, 17, 208
112 DATA 169, 234, 141, 110, 102
115 DATA 141, 111, 102, 141, 112, 102
120 DATA 141, 113, 102, 141, 114, 102
130 DATA 141, 115, 102, 76, 0, 132
```

Check for errors and if everything seems fine, type RUN (RETURN) **and press play on tape when prompted. Once *Black Thunder* has loaded you will be invincible, but I'm afraid the socks are entirely up to you.**

WIZARDRY (The Edge)

Here it is, the complete solution to level three as promised several months ago. Alright, I'm sorry, I know I should have printed it earlier, but you know how it is . . . You don't? Well let me tell you . . .

Open the chest to get the **FIREBALL** and **MAP D**. Go through the door to your right and walk down the corridor beyond until you come to another door to your right. Go through it, take a left, through the door and get the **HOLD IT** and **KNOCK** spells from the chest. Now peg it all the way back to the beginning of level three and nip through the door to your right as you enter the room. Use the KNOCK spell on the skull in the top left hand corner to open up a hidden doorway.

Leave this room to get back to the start and exit through the door to the right of the screen. You should now be standing in the corridor you walked down previously. OK? OK, walk along this corridor and go right, through the first door you come across. Now turn left and exit through the door at the top of the screen. Turn right and keep walking until you meet a door. Go through it. You are now in a large corridor. Walk up the corridor ('into' the screen) and take the first door on your left. There is a head in the top left hand corner of this room — go through it. You will be transported to another location with a magic door in the top left hand corner. Go through it to be transported to yet another mystery location.

There is a head in the corner, but don't touch it — it's a trap! Walk down and go through the door into a room with a flying skull and a chest. Inside the chest are **HEAL** and HOLD IT spells, so get them before going through the door to the left. We will call this room 'THE room' for future reference. In the centre of THE room (see, what did I tell you? But that was only practising — we'll be using it for real later on) there should be a chest with two skulls guarding one side and two snakes guarding the other. DO NOT touch the chest from the side guarded by the skulls or you will die! Come from behind where the snakes lie and you will be transported to a far away place . . .

. . . KAZAM! You are standing in a long corridor with a large snake guardian for company. What now?

Go down until you come to a door.

OK. You are standing by a door to the left. What now?

Go through door into long room.

OK. You are in a long room with an evil apparition. There is also a chest here. What now?

Open chest.

Ha! Ha! It was a trap. You are dead. Serves you right for being so nosey. Do you want to play again?

No, I'll continue where I left off . . .

Leave the chest (trap) and go through the door to your left. You should now be in a room containing a spider and a chest. Open the chest to acquire HEAL and **FIND IT** spells. Go out of this room and back into the corridor. Turn right and stroll down the corridor until you reach a door. Go through it. There is a head in the top left hand corner of the room (aren't they always?) — ignore it and go through the door at the bottom. In the room beyond there is a chest. Open it and a genie will appear. Elsewhere, a previously hidden door will open. Go out the way you came in and walk into the head (top left corner) to get transported back to a room near the start of level three. Make your way back to THE room (remember that?) where you will find there is a door that wasn't there before. Yes there is — go to the top of the room and . . . Yes, THAT door that wasn't there before. Well done. Right, go through it and you will find a chest. Open it to gain the **SLAY SNAKE** and HEAL spells.

Now I don't know if you remember or not, but there was this huge snake guarding the way earlier on. Yes, that big blue (grey, if you've only got a black and white portable) scaly thing. OK, go back into the room you just came from (the one with that chest guarded by the pair of skulls and the pair of snakes — and no, don't use the SLAY SNAKE spell on them, save it for the big one . . . Please?) and touch the chest — FROM THE SIDE GUARDED BY SNAKES!! (I put that in capitals in case you forgot about the trap on the other side). You should now be standing in the corridor inhabited by the big snake. Yes? Great. OK then, kill it with the SLAY SNAKE spell. Done that? Nice one. Stroll casually up the corridor, through the door at the end and onto level four . .

PARADROID (Hewson)

You can thank Andrew King of Horley, Surrey for these POKEs. Rewind your *Paradroid* tape to the beginning, type SYS 63276 (RETURN) and press play on tape when prompted. When the computer responds with FOUND Paradroid, press the Commodore key. Now type in the the following POKEs to kill the sprite collision detection . . .

POKE 961,32 (RETURN)
POKE 962,128 (RETURN)
POKE 963,208 (RETURN)
POKE 53376,169 (RETURN)
POKE 53377,2 (RETURN)
POKE 53378,141 (RETURN)
POKE 53379,226 (RETURN)
POKE 53380,111 (RETURN)
POKE 53381,169 (RETURN)
POKE 53382,138 (RETURN)
POKE 53383,141 (RETURN)
POKE 53384,225 (RETURN)
POKE 53385,111 (RETURN)
POKE 53386,96 (RETURN)

Typing SYS 849 (RETURN) will load and run *Paradroid.*

BMX RACERS (Mastertronic)

Some more POKEs from Andrew. Load *BMX Racers* and reset the machine. Now enter the following:

POKE 11617,138 (RETURN)
POKE 11618,2 (RETURN)
SYS 11770 (RETURN) to start the game and allow you to pass through the obstacles.

DARE DEVIL DENNIS II (Viper)

Andrew King also supplied these POKEs, which let you walk through the flowers on the first screen. Simply load the game, reset the computer and type in . . .

POKE 24683,138 (RETURN)
POKE 24684,2 (RETURN)
followed by SYS 39700 (RETURN) to start.

HUNCHBACK (Ocean)

Yes, yet more POKEs from Andy. Rewind the tape to the beginning, type LOAD (RETURN) and when the READY prompt appears type NEW (RETURN), followed by LOAD "",1,1 (RETURN). The rest of *Hunchback* will now load, but not run, allowing you to enter these POKEs to stop all sprite collisions . . .

POKE 22342,0 (RETURN)
POKE 22343,221 (RETURN)
POKE 22399,0 (RETURN)
POKE 22400,221 (RETURN)
POKE 22283,0 (RETURN)
POKE 22284,221 (RETURN)

Trolly (Game Hacker II) also sent in some POKEs for *Hunchback* . . .

POKE 31352,number of lives (1-255) (RETURN)
OR how about . . .
POKE 22521,234 (RETURN)
POKE 22522,234 (RETURN)
POKE 22523,234 (RETURN)
. . . for infinite lives.
To start the game, type SYS 16384 (RETURN).

WHIRLYNURD (US Gold)

A few more POKEs from Trolly (Game Hacker II). Rewind the *Whirlynurd* tape to the beginning (make sure it's the 64 side), type LOAD (RETURN) and press play on tape. When the READY prompt appears, type in:

POKE 1011,248 (RETURN)
POKE 1012,252 (RETURN)
RUN (RETURN)
The game will now load, but not run. When the 64 resets, enter these POKEs . . .
POKE 17201,number of lives (RETURN)
OR alternatively . . .
POKE 21063,234 (RETURN)
POKE 21064,234 (RETURN)
POKE 21065,234 (RETURN)
. . . for infinite lives. Type SYS 16384 (RETURN) to start the game.

SPY HUNTER (US Gold)

POKEs for infinite time, courtesy once again of Trolly (Game Hacker II). Type LOAD (RETURN) and press play on tape. After the first part of Spy Hunter has loaded, enter the following:

POKE 1011,248 (RETURN)
POKE 1012,252 (RETURN)
RUN (RETURN)
Wait for *Spy Hunter* to load and the computer to reset before typing in POKE 35914,255 (RETURN), followed by SYS 32782 (RETURN) to start.

BUCK ROGERS (US Gold)

Load the game, reset the computer, enter the POKEs supplied by (yawn) Trolly (Game Hacker II), start the game, grab your joystick, sit back and . . . Well, play I suppose.

POKE 33182,number of lives (RETURN)
OR if you want infinite lives .

POKE 39290,234 (RETURN)
POKE 39291,234 (RETURN)
POKE 39292,234 (RETURN)
POKE 10617,234 (RETURN)
POKE 10618,234 (RETURN)
POKE 10619,234 (RETURN)
You could even POKE 33186,(1-255) (RETURN) to alter the number of gates you have to pass through in order to move on to the next sheet. Or how does POKE 33122,(0-15) (RETURN) to change the initial foreground colour, grab you? Then again, you could POKE 33048,(0-15) (RETURN) to change the colour of the border during game. But in the end it's best to SYS 32782 (RETURN) and start the game.

SCARABAEUS (Ariolasoft)

Our very own Gary Liddon has devised a series of POKEs for infinite energy and a host of other things. Just type in the following listing and . . .



. . . oh dear, I'm afraid that's all for this month. Never mind, maybe next month, eh? Don't forget to keep sending in all those tips, maps and POKEs etc, 'cos this section wouldn't be the same without you, you cute little reader you. See you all in May (that's April in the real world) . . .

Send all relevant bits of mail (and that doesn't include SAEs) to: ZZAP! TIPS, ZZAP! MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

PS: (this bit's for you) I won't forget to include ZZAP! MAGAZINE in the address, 'cos I know it screws up the poor little sorting people sooo badly and gets them upset and makes them cry and, and, and — well, it's not a very nice thing to do, is it?

SIGNED: A. READER

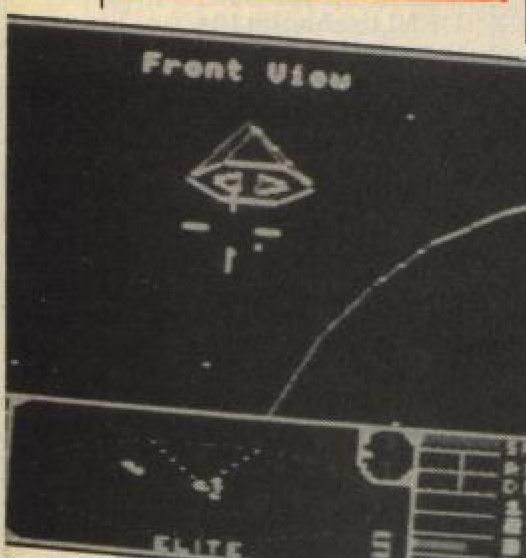
THE 1985 ZZAP! R



Look Nowhere Else!
This is IT!
The Definitive Awards for the Best Software of 1985!
Accept no Substitutes!

In the Christmas Special issue of ZZAP! we asked you to vote for the best games of 1985 under several headings. The inputting from thousands of forms has been done, the collations made and now, here are the results — the games you thought deserved applause. The results are presented in the same order as the voting form, and we show not only the winner but also the second and third placings in each category, plus the percentage of the vote each received.

BEST GAME OVERALL



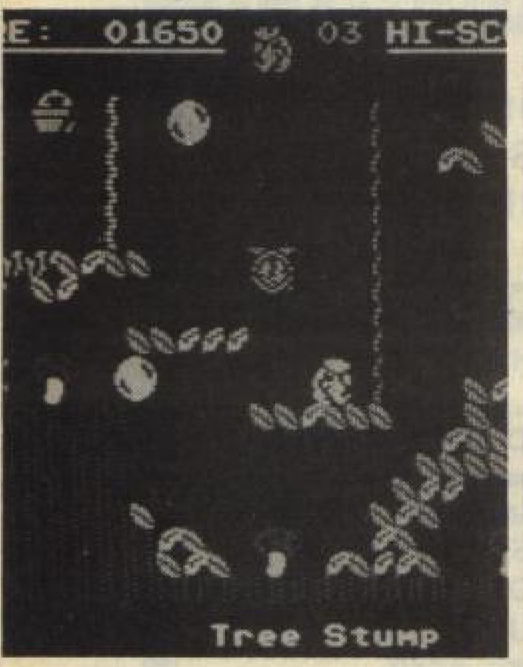
ELITE
Firebird

There seemed to be little doubt about this choice, the space trading/action game received 19% of the total vote, making it the clear winner.

In second place, getting 13% of the vote was SUMMER GAMES II from US Gold, and following very closely came Hewson's PARADROID with 12%.

BEST PLATFORM GAME

MONTY ON THE RUN
Gremlin Graphics

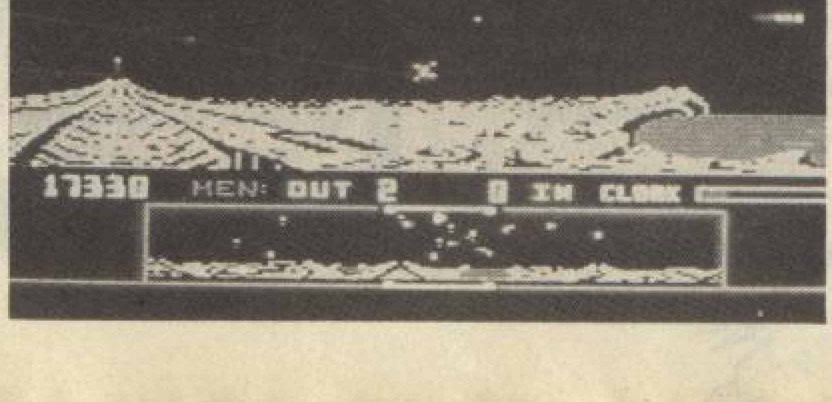


Developed from Peter Harrap's Spectrum original, this was also a pretty clear winner with no less than 26% of ZZAP! readers voting it into the number one position. Following some distance behind came BOUNTY BOB STRIKES BACK from US Gold/Big Five, getting 19%, and in third position was IMPOSSIBLE MISSION with 13%.

BEST SHOOT EM UP

DROPZONE
US Gold

Not too many problems here either! Archer Maclean's furious shoot and rescue game gained a high 31% from its supporters, getting on for double what PARADROID received, which came in second at 19%. In the third place slot, and a long way down, was Elite's COMMANDO with 9%.



BEST ARCADE ADVENTURE

ENTOMBED
Ultimate

This category was very hard fought and resulted in some close placings. Ultimate's second Pendragon adventure for the 64 won out, however, receiving 15%. Breathing down its neck was Ocean's FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD, which logged 13% of the vote, while practically clambering on its back NODES OF YESOD from Odin got 12%.

BEST TEXT-ONLY ADVENTURE

HITCH-HIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY
Infocom

Not surprisingly, perhaps, Infocom swept the board here! HITCH received 11%, while their ZORK TRILOGY collected 6% and SUSPECT 4%. The low percentages reflect the fact that the voting list in this category was enormous, encompassing a huge spread of games.

BEST GRAPHICAL ADVENTURE

RED MOON
Level 9 Computing

Again, there was wide disagreement between voters, but Level 9's offerings were all high, RED MOON sweeping all before it, and receiving 10%. The humour of TERRORMOLINOS from Melbourne House endeared itself to 6%, with GREMLINS from Adventure International partying on 5% in third place.

BEST FLIGHT SIMULATION

ACE
Cascade

Spurning the most serious type of flight sim, the ZZAP! readership plumped for Cascade's ACE with a convincing 29%. Ariolasoft weren't too far behind however, and SKYFOX earned itself a worthy 20% for second place. In third position came the helicopter simulation SUPER HUEY from US Gold/Cosmi with 15%.

EADERS AWARDS

BEST SPORTS SIMULATION

SUMMER GAMES II
US Gold/Epyx

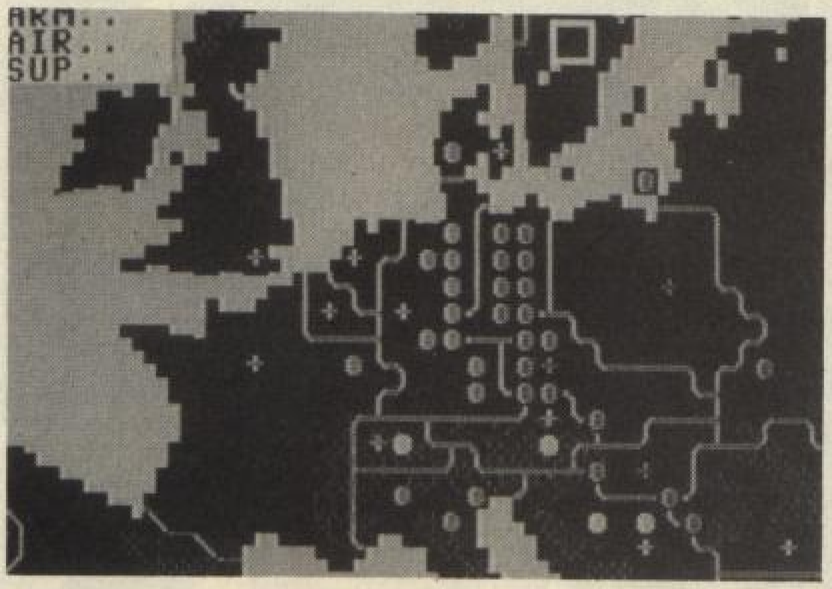
This was the second most convincing win of all the categories, receiving its support from almost half the readership with 46%. Perhaps the more attractive weather of summer helped, for from the same stable WINTER GAMES came in second with 26% of the vote, leaving Activision/Lucasfilm's future sport simulation, BALLBLAZER, in third place with 8%.

BEST WARGAME

THEATRE EUROPE
PSS

No doubts here whatsoever — the biggest single vote in the Awards went to this anti-nuclear wargame with 51% making it their top wargame. PSS also did well with BATTLE FOR MIDWAY, despite the ZZAP! Strategist's doubts about the game, for it came second with 10%. Oddly enough, the purists gave way to the shoot em up addicts, who voted Elite's COMMANDO into third position with 4%.





BEST GRAPHICS

WINTER GAMES
US Gold/Epyx

Under this heading, the situation swapped round, because 39% prferred the wintry graphics to those of the second placed SUMMER GAMES II, which received 14%. In the graphical stakes, EXPLODING FIST from Melbourne House came in third with 8%, leaving sports sims with the honours for graphics in 1985.



BEST SOUND FX

EXPLODING FIST
Melbourne House

Melbourne may not have quite pipped it for the pictures, but they certainly took it for the sound effects, getting a crunchy 15% for FIST. Ariolasoft's highly atmospheric SCARABAEUS came in second with 10%, and in third place the clackety clack noises and speech of IMPOSSIBLE MISSION attracted 7%.

BEST MUSIC

MONTY ON THE RUN
Gremlin Graphics

Despite a wide range from which to choose, Rob Hubbard's MONTY music received a clear vote of 27%. Second equal came Ocean's FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD and another Gremlin hit, THING ON A SPRING, each receiving 8% for their harmonies.

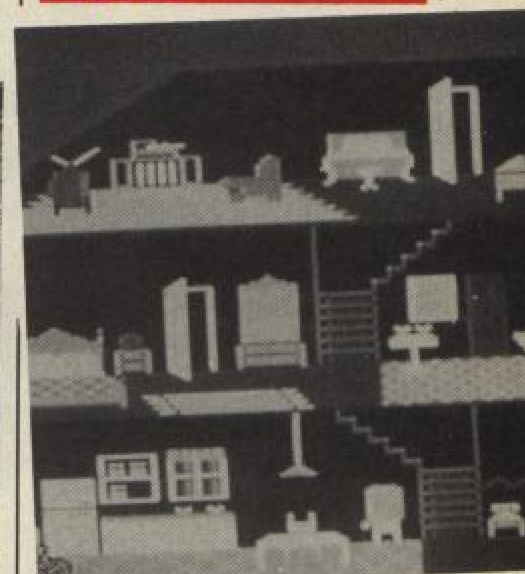
TACKIEST GAME OF THE YEAR

COPS AND ROBBERS
Atlantis Gold

This was an extremely hard fought category indeed! The clear winner, however, managed 2% more in its vote than in did in review. ZZAP! called it 'the worst game we've ever seen on the 64', and 11% of you agreed. JET SET WILLY II from Software Projects slipped into second place with 9% and Ultimate's IMHOTEP managed third with 8%. If it's any consolation, the collation form for this category was the longest and featured nearly every game made!



STATE OF THE ART AWARD



LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE
Activision

This coveted award was convincingly given to Activision for David Crane's alarming discovery that your 64 has inhabitants. 23% went to the little pet people, outstripping the second equal placings for Hewson's PARADROID and US Gold's SUMMER GAMES II, which each received 10% of the vote.

So that's it for the 1985 ZZAP! Readers Awards. Congratulations to all the software houses who were voted best at what they did, and a big thank you to all the thousands of ZZAP! Readers who took the trouble to fill in their forms and send them back to us.

The Award winners will all be receiving their 'coveted' trophies as soon as someone up in Admin can get them organised, and that leaves us with nothing further to do but announce the voting form winners. We said 15 forms would be drawn from the bag, earning their senders a voucher for 15 worth of software as well as a ZZAP! T-shirt.

And here you are, you lucky voters . . .

David Parker, Herts HP3 8BU; Kevin Jones, Cheshire SK15 2LU; Michael Bailey, Tyne & Wear, NE25 OAA; Ian James, Gwent NP3 5UG; Aldo Rinaldi, Neath, West Glamorgan South Wales; Andrew Rawcliffe, Lancs PR5 1XP; Simon Edwards, Kent BR7 4EU; Mr P C Clift, Gloucestershire GL13 9NB; Lee Dunne, Staffs ST4 6PX; Michael Morgan, Wythenshawe, Manchester; P Manning, Liverpool L23 OTD; Steven Morris, Staffs ST8 7AV; John Rostron, North Humberside HU13 9BN; Robert Howe, West Yorkshire BD18 3AT; A Groundwater, Northern Ireland, NE23 6NT

MINDBLOWN BY MINDSMEAR

The ZZAP! Team had a phone call from two unknown, budding programmers who pressed hard enough to get this preview included at the very last minute. Calls like this are ten a penny, but to everyone's amazement their game MINDSMEAR turned out to be a shocker — read on . . .

Forget Lucasfilm. Forget Accolade. Forget Archer Maclean. Forget Jeff Minter. Stand by for a shock that may be as educational as it is startling. Soon to be released on an ususpecting world is *Mindsmear*, a game that defies categorisation. *Mindsmear* wipes away all those 'well we've done as much with the machine as is possible' cynics and may well start something of a revolution in the industry.

Mindsmear takes place within our solar system in a future where engineering has evolved robots far enough for them to be labelled as life. The sum total of countless thousands of artificial evolutionary stages is an almost perfect synthetic breed called **Meldlings**. What price humanity in such a scenario? Not much sadly, but people do still exist, for the most part hunted down as vermin. However, there exists a band of few who oppose the Meldlings and struggle for existence. For **The Few** the pivotal point of power lies in the possession of the Jovian moon Titan.

Within Titan's atmosphere is the largest readily available source of Hydrogen, needed in immense quantities to power any sort of practible space travel. Using age-old skimming methods it's possible to gather this essential material from Titan's internal chemistry. Unfortunately Titan is Meldling controlled — but it's your job to change all that. You are the ultimate creation of *The Few* technology made up from 'identity slices' from the best brains within the last of human society, you are a *Mindsmear*.

Several Meldling ground targets on Titan need to be destroyed, normally an impossible task, but thanks to your contacts on Earth it's possible to hold off attacks from Meldling intelligence. The way to deter enemy intervention is via subterfuge: this is the brains part of *Mindsmear* and very interesting it is too. Using a complex windowing system, a sort of adventure game is played whilst trying to destroy main bunkers on Titan. It's possible to play both games simultaneously, the game screen shrinks down and the map/text screens are overlayed as windows, but be warned, the computer finds it easier to multitask than you will!

The main game is in 3D — as near to life as a Commodore could ever be. Admittedly *Eidolon* was good, but there's just no valid comparison. The main surprise is how smoothly everything moves while the illusion of true perspective in constantly captured. Each frame stands up as a competent piece of Commodore art. Even though the still photographs look impressive, they give but an inkling to *Mindsmear's* reality. Your ship is very neat, capable of a most astounding list of manoeuvres. Control is somewhat similar, but more versatile, to that employed in *Mercenary*. The routines interpreting the stick's movements are very clever, using specialized artificial intelligence procedures to make sure the joystick does what is needed. There's even an onboard computer that controls attacks on enemy ships, though caution should be exercised as it's prone to enemy infiltration. There's nothing worse than getting blasted to smithereens by your own battle computer!

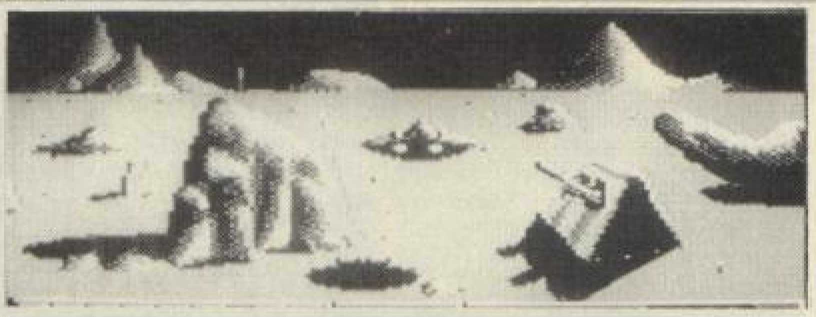
The version exclusively shown to us at the ZZAP! offices was about 60% complete, but the main bulk of the game is written. At the time of going to print the two programmers of the project, **Paul** and **Phillip O'Connor**, were just starting to look for someone to publish *Mindsmear*. Neither have the time to spend running a company of their own so a third party to market the game seems like a good idea. After seeing *Mindsmear* we're sure they won't have to look very far.

Technically *Mindsmear* really is a doozy. Hardly surprising considering the dazzling academic background of the main coder, 18 year old Paul O' Connor. After taking an entry exam for Cambridge at the age of 14 he's been there since and is now studying for a Doctorate in Maths and Psychology. How did Paul manage to squeeze so much into a machine so many think has reached its limit? 'Well the advantage we had over many other 64 programmers was that we were totally new to the machine. This may seem paradoxical but after talking to habitual 64 games authors it really seemed that they were bogged down by what had gone before them. We looked at the computer as a totally new hardware entity and designed a game accordingly.'

Paul's work is the mainstay of the program but many of the sub-sections that make *Mindsmear* so amazing were created by Paul's brother Phillip. Phil is currently at secondary school studying for 'O' levels. 'The main secret was to work out a sensible data structure, preferably one that would work table-driven to keep up the general speed we needed. The trouble is that tables take up so much memory, so a sort of table buffer is used where the main reference blocks are generated rather than loaded. We did cheat a bit on the cassette version with the 'invisible' loading of code. While you play, large chunks of text are being pulled into computer. The speed depreciation of this system is negligible but the real problem is having so many sprites on screen and keeping everything reliable.'

What surprised us most were the extremely high speed filled graphics, they really put *Elite* and *Mercenary* to shame, we asked Paul how such astounding moving images were created. 'The good idea we had was to use the disk drive as slave processor to the main prog. It makes life very easy and means that a true 3D image can be generated and pulled onto screen in much less than a frame flyback, something previously unachieved on the 64. Obviously this was to detriment of the cassette version but after many late nights and quite a few pints of Home Brew the main algorithms were suitably speeded up to make the cassette version viable. It meant we could really go to town on disk version though, I particularly liked the sampled guitar note we got to do a very convincing Dave Gilmour guitar solo. Now that was cool.'

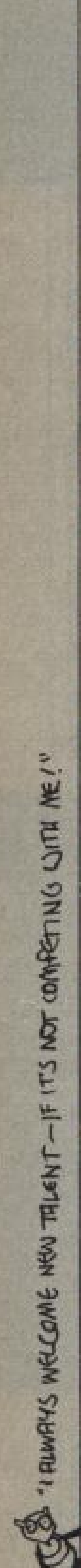
Titan ground targets — an example of the filled in 3D effect achieved in MINDSMEAR, sadly black and white stills do them little credit.

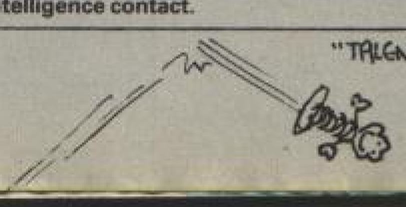






Multi-tasking on MINDSMEAR with the map window pulled down over the action background, in this case Great Britain where you want to locate an intelligence contact.







Hat, Hat it's where it's at, it's trendier than a cat, Hat . . .

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Unit 10, The Parkway Industrial Centre, Heneage Street, Birmingham B7 4LY Tel: 021-359 8881

ZZAP! COMP

WIN A SEIKO RC-1000 WATCH!



This amazing cross between a watch and a database could be yours!

We've had one of these incredibly cunning gadgets in the office for a week now, and it really is very clever. The complete package includes everything that you need to connect your computer and watch together and get them talking. The manual that comes with it is very clearly written, taking you through the steps necessary for successfully feeding the watch with information in a very straightforward manner.

This ultimate product of the Gadget Age could be yours. Not for the usual £99-odd that you would have to hand over in the High Street, but totally free. Hattori UK — the people who distribute the watch in the UK, have said that we can give one away to a deserving ZZAP! reader.

Write and tell us why you deserve to receive an RC-1000 for nothing. We don't want begging letters. Oh No. That'd never do — there's quite enough creeping goes on at the top of ordinary letters to FORUM.

No, we want you to write and tell us what you'd use this Datagraph for if we gave it you. What useful snippets of information would you squirrel away inside its 80 pages of memory? How would using the watch change your life?

Best submission to ZZAP! 64 SEIKO, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB. Make sure your ideas reach the Minion's post box by the 27th March, and you could soon be amazing your friends with your stunning new watch.

Be careful though — if you win, your Commodore might get jealous!

Seiko have produced the first wrist computer terminal — the RC-1000. It's a digital watch with a difference. It can do much more than tell you time of day. Forget those simple beeping digital watches that include chronographs, lap timers (whatever the average human being uses **them** for), and stopwatches. Just like they say in the advertisements, nowadays "you can take a little bit of your computer with you wherever you go".



Well, a little bit of your computer's memory. Oh alright then, a little bit of the contents of your computer's memory. You see this watch can be used as a portable mini-database, storing up to 2K of information on eighty 'pages'.

The watch face itself contains a 12 by 2 alphanumeric display (letters and numbers, dolt!) on which the time, day, date and year appear when it's pretending to be an ordinary watch. But the RC-1000 has hidden depths: it is really a Datagraph, a cross between a chronograph and a database.

You can prepare information to store in the memory of the watch on your computer using the editing software that comes with the package. All you do is hook it up to your Commodore's user port via the special lead supplied and download your data.

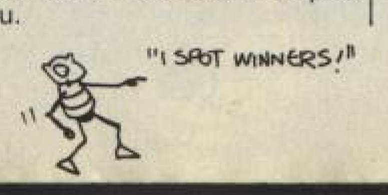
Each of the eighty 'pages' of memory in the watch can be used as a menu screen, which heads up a number of other pages of memory and leads into them. So if you set up one page as the Address Menu, then you have up to 79 pages remaining in which to store the details of your friends' addresses. Accessing the the Address Menu with one of the little buttons on the face of the watch, you can then step through the actual address screens until you come across the information you want.

But there's more. If you want to set an alarm signal to remind you to do something it can be linked to the memory pages. So when the watch goes beep at half past nine in the morning of September 23rd 1986 it doesn't just go beep and leave it at that. It shows you the relevant page, which reminds you what to do at 9.30 am, 23/9/86. Smart? Yes, definitely, especially as you can program reminder alarms up to a year in advance.

More still: If you have to do something every Sunday at 8.00 — perhaps get ready to watch the next episode of ZZAPNASTY on telly, then you can get the watch to beep and show you the appropriate reminder page at 8.00 every Sunday until you tell it to stop.

International jet setters who can never remember what the time is right now There, where they're going, while they're still Here, getting ready to go, will be amazed by the way you can program up to 79 different world times into this little beast. Sort out the sums, load up the watch from your computer and you need never be stuck for an answer when you're in London and someone asks what the time is. In Rio.

And if you are always forgetting vital bits of information, you can write yourself memos — perhaps just the phone number of your doctor or a reminder to wash behind the ears. It's up to you.



WINNERS: WINNERS: WINNERS: WINNERS:

This month we catch up with the two Christmas Special comp results which we missed last month, as well as those from issue 10.

GREEBLY WEEBLY COMP

CRL's game *Space Doubt* resulted in a 'design a Greebly Weebly (whatever that may be — can I help it if my brain's deranged)? We had a satisfyingly horrific selection greeblies from all over — one winner getting a Toshiba Ghetto blaster and 25 runners-up each receiving a copy of *Space Doubt*. The winner, then, was **Robert Stone** from Lowestoft Suffolk NR32 3EA.

The runners up: Ian McAuliffe, Herts AL5 2LL; Neil Alexander, Cardiff CF4 8BQ; Jason Conolly, Sunderland SR3 1YW; L Cornthwaite, Essex RM18 7RT; Neil Croxton, W Midlands B63 2TB; Russ Eade, Cheam, Surrey; S Elliot, Sussex BN8 6PN; Alex Garland, London NW3 2RV; Terry Gilligan, Leeds LS16 7SJ; Mark Hall, Northants NN7 4ST; Michael Heenan Jnr, Fife KY4 9LG; Carolyn Hewitson, Cleveland TS19 7EA; Andrew Jackson, Leics LE6 5JH; Chris Nelson, Paisley PA2 8QS; Nial Quee, Co Down, N Ireland; Paul Smith, Northumberland NE23 6JE; Peter Stitson, Essex IG1 1SL; Paul Vakharia, Middx UB6 9TX; Darren Warner, W Yorks LS22 4NU; Simon Wivell, S Humberside DN37 9HL.

"OOH DEAR..."



BUBBLE BUS WIZARD'S LAIR MAP

Straightforward one, this — an outright winner for drawing the best map, and the winner who gets the mini portable telly set is **Steven Medcraft** from Rayleigh, Essex SS6 8BP. Well done Steven.

Alan Brown's winning entry for the M.A.D. complete the comic strip competition.







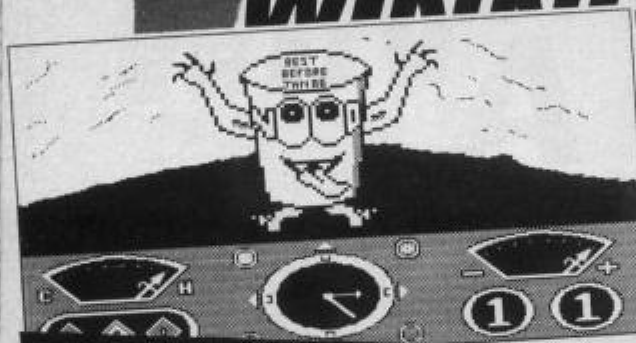
MASTERTRONIC M.A.D. COMP

Onto issue 10 comps. First off, Mastertronic were offering a wacky all expenses-paid day out for completing a comic strip. Some excellent entries arrived for this one, but after much hair tearing we chose the one from **Allan Brown** of Upton-by-Chester, Cheshire. Hope you can cope with the day out Allan.

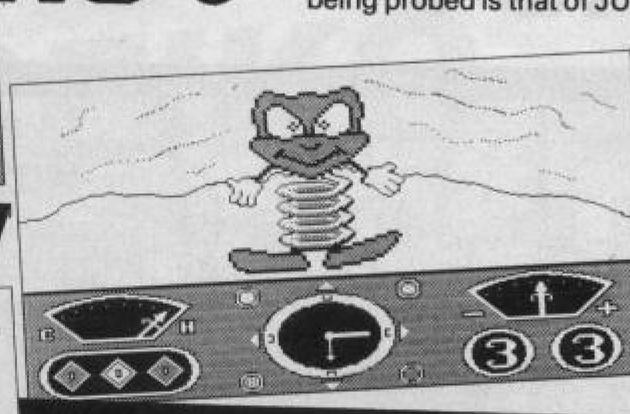
"IT'S ME! COMIC STAR AT LAST!"

WINNERS · WINNERS · WINNERS · WINNERS

Below we reproduce the winning entry from PETER WILLIAMS (Craven Arms, Shropshire) to the 'INSIDE A REVIEWER'S MIND' competition, sponsored by Activision for the EIDOLON. you may think Peter hacked into the program, but you would be wrong — everything has been done with a light pen and redrawn. The mind being probed is that of JULIAN RIGNALL . . .

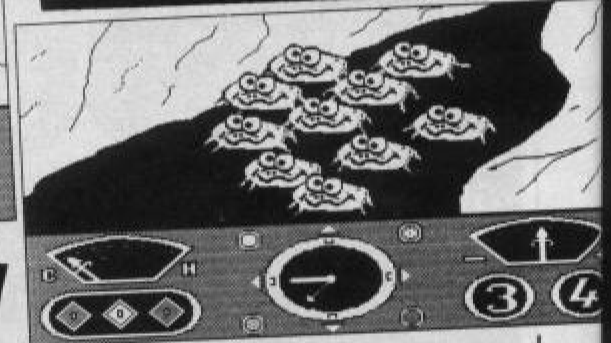


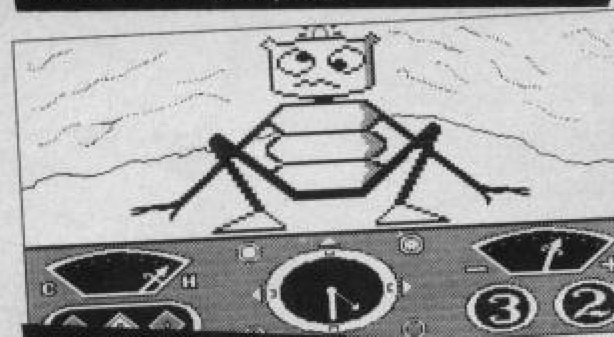
A thousand tortured souls of devoured pot noodles have combined a la Ghostbusters to form a 'Pot Noodle Man'. I'm a bit worried about his mental condition, in fact he must be nuts coz he wants to conker the world! Joke. Geddit. Suit yourself.



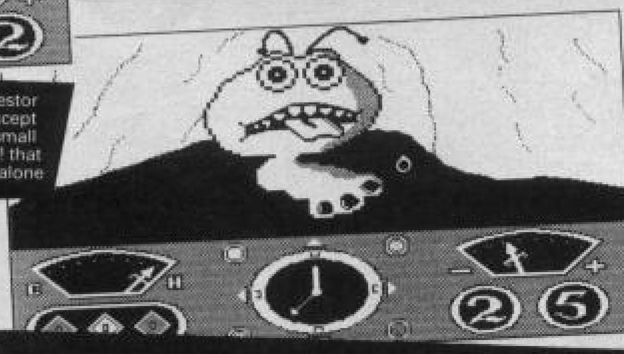
Here we see a Springosaurus Rex giving me a hypnotic stare and an evil grin. Interesting Fact: Did you know that a springosaurus's arms are too short to pick his own nose? This explains why they are solitary creatures due to the fact that they keep asking everyone they meet to pick their nose for them! Yuck! I obliged by picking his nose with a few red fireballs!

I bumped in these chaps on Level 4. They are, so they tell me, JR's brain cells. They're trying to escape because they are fed up with having nothing to do. I know how they feel, I was unemployed once!





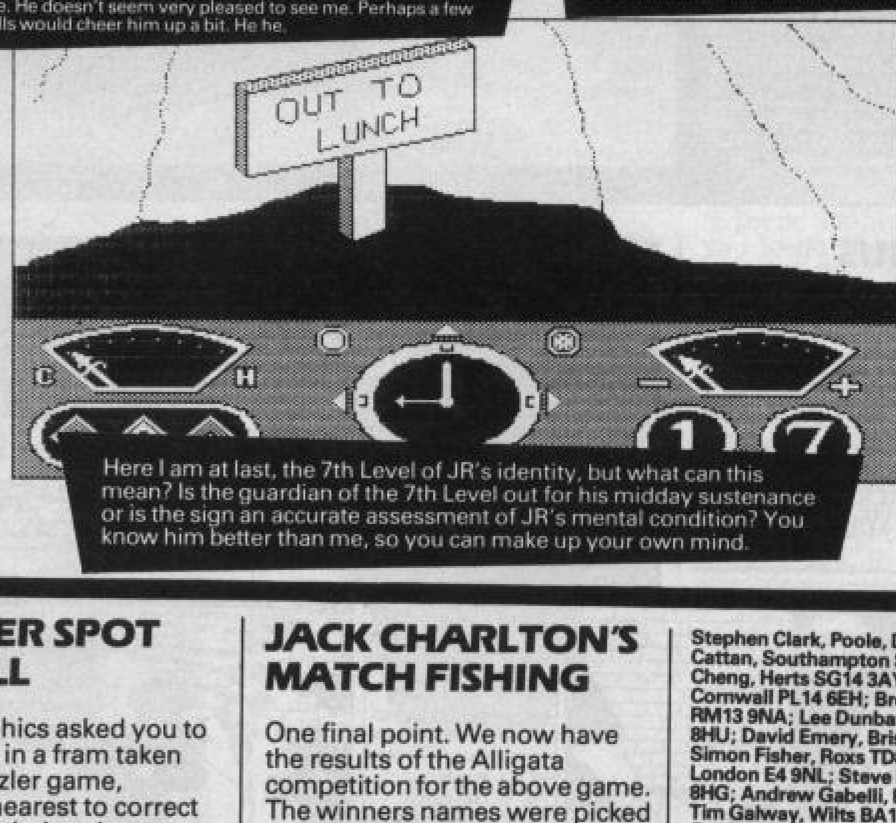
A Giant Rockfordocus sits dazed in his cave. This primitive ancestor of the much loved Rockford is very similar to his descendant except for his size and intellect. After all, when you're a giant living in a small cave, you should be more careful about how you move around! that bump on his head should teach him to leave us 'mind travellers' alone in future.



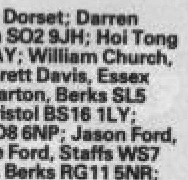
Hmmm . . . . the creatures in JR's mind seem to have a marked propensity for sticking their tongues out! Perhaps Freud would have an explanation for this. The creature is, of course, a Gribbly Groblodile. He doesn't seem very pleased to see me. Perhaps a few red fireballs would cheer him up a bit. He he.



Woops! Round a bend and straight into an Ancipital. This area of JR's brain must be where his opinions of Jeff Minter are stored. Jeff has obviously been here before me and left the Ancipital to make sure these opinions are kept secret. Will it work though?



Here I am at last, the 7th Level of JR's identity, but what can this mean? Is the guardian of the 7th Level out for his midday sustenance or is the sign an accurate assessment of JR's mental condition? You know him better than me, so you can make up your own mind.



INSIDE A REVIEWER'S MIND

Activision's game *Eidolon* inspired the idea for this comp, a trip through a ZZAP! reviewer's brain. The comp inspired the entrants too, some of the best ideas we've ever received. Again this was a tough one to pick for the first place (a 1451 Disk Drive and all 4 Lucasfilm games on disk). 2nd and 3rd place get all four games on cassette, followed by 50 runners-up prizes of *Eidolon*.

The winner, then, was **Peter Williams** Craven Arms, Shropshire SY7 9QS. In second and third place we find **K M Law and Steven** from near Royston, Herts SG8 6BW, and **Luis Troyano** from Stockport, Cheshire SK1 3PF.

The runners up: G Anderson, Lincs LN5 9AY; Robin Ashdown, Kent BR4 9DF; John Baker, Bucks HP11 1JL; Jon Baker, Oxon OX9 2HY; Andrew Birkitt, Leeds LS25 5HG; Neil Brewis, Tyne & Wear SR6 7QQ; Joseph & Daniel Cartwright, W Yorks LS21 2RJ; Norman Cod, Lancs PR4 3TJ; Neil Cole, Coventry CV6 3BZ; Steve Cooper, Kent ME1 2JW; Dermot Coules, N Ireland BT78 5BA; Rowan Craven, W Yorks BD22 95S; Patrick Divine, London E16 2DE; Andrew Dolphin, Birmingham B27 7TR; Gethyn Edwards, Berks RG4 9TD; Nicholas Frampton, Winchester SOZZ 6QQ; Adam Foulger, Suffolk IP28 6SB; Martin Freckleton, Birmingham B37 5TL; Issac Ganee, London N13 6HL; Richard Gelsthorpe, Lincs PE10 9LY; Chris Gosden, Fareham, Hampshire; Stephen Griggs, Kent ME17 1UX; David Hardy, Nottingham NG5 4LA; Robert Henwood, Somerset TA6 7PZ; Sean Hopkins, Hants PO2 OLA; J Hunter, Lancs WN7 4HA; P A K, London ES OEB; Steven Kelly, Lancs BB12 7QU; Matthew Kibby, Avon BS19 2RG; Andrew Lee, Huddersfield HD3 3SJ; Angus Lee, Aberdeen AB2 4UB; D Lee, Nottingham NG5 5HR; Martin Lee, Devon EX2 5NS; M Marston, Cleveland TS14 6DH; Kevin McCall, Ayrshire KA1 5HJ; Javier Medina, 29017 Malaga, Spain; Steven Miller, Lancs OL6 8BX; Jason Milne, Aberdeen AB4 6ER; Stephen Oldroyd, W Yorks WF1 3DN; Jonathan Palmer, Oxon OX6 7RR; Barry Pringle, Middlesex UB6 8DG; Stephen Proctor, Leicester LE9 5JU; Nicholas Sneddon, Essex IG1 3LA; Rob Sykes, Torquay, S Devon; Mikk Taylor, Lincs PE21 7DQ; Simon Thompson, Stafford ST17 9QY; Christopher J Walton, Staffs WS13 OND; Brian Wheeler, Lincs PE25 3RA; Richard Whitehouse, W Midlands WS10 ORL; Paul Young, Sheffield S5 OAJ.

BOUNDER SPOT THE BALL

Gremlin Graphics asked you to 'spot the ball' in a fram taken from their Sizzler game, *Bounder*. 25 nearest to correct answers earn their writers a Bounder Sweatshirt.

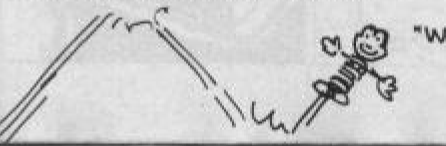
Paul Julian Allan, Aberdeen AB2 1XT; Craig Cessford, Jedburgh TD8 6HT; Marc Childerhouse, Norwich NR12 8YL; P J Conway, Berkshire RG16 GTR; David Degville, W Midlands W53 3QA; Matthew Drake, Kent BR4 9AY; Jason Footman, W Midlands WS4 1ES; Kevin Green, London N8; Paul Gorman, Fife KY14 GDN; Grahame Hale, Wiltshire BA14 OLS; Martin Haynes, Bude, Cornwall; Simon Hobbs, Essex RM14 3PA; Steve Jones, E Sussex BU3 7AQ; Stephen Kearon, Dublin 18, Ireland; Nick Laslett, Kent CT3 4DT; Owen Lewis, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE2 3LA; Mark Lockley , Worcs WR13 6NT; Gary McManus, Glasgow G15 8EV; Duncan Mummeris, Herts AL1 4TJ; David Richards, Lancs OL9 6BE; G Saxton , Nottingham NG7 6DZ; Christopher Smith, Worcester WR4 9QF; Karl Wadsack, Hants SP6 2HF; Andrew West, Devon EX8 3HR; Mark Woolrich, Doncaster DN1 2NS.

JACK CHARLTON'S MATCH FISHING

One final point. We now have the results of the Alligata competition for the above game. The winners names were picked by Jack Charlton himself in the presence of Gary Penn. The winner gets a week long adventure holiday. 2nd place receives a complete fishing outfit and then the 50 runners up get the board game version of *Match Fishing*.

So, the lucky winner is **Philip Ellson** from Alcester, Warwickshire, and the 2nd place goes to **Tim Darwell-Smith** of Nantwich, Cheshire. Have a happy holiday Philip!

The runners up: Alex Barber, Manchester MC11 1DE; Darren Barnes, Surrey TW20 0QB; Nathan Barnett, Ulverston, Cumbria; Mather Bingham, Glos GL10 2DW; Mark Brady, Kent DA1 4HS; Chris Bright, Worcs WR11 6PS; James Carr, Suffolk IP1 6JR; Stephen Clark, Poole, Dorset; Darren Cattan, Southampton SO2 9JH; Hoi Tong Cheng, Herts SG14 3AY; William Church, Cornwall PL14 6EH; Brett Davis, Essex RM13 9NA; Lee Dunbarton, Berks SL5 8HU; David Emery, Bristol BS16 1LY; Simon Fisher, Roxs TD8 6NP; Jason Ford, London E4 9NL; Steve Ford, Staffs WS7 8HG; Andrew Gabelli, Berks RG11 5NR; Tim Galway, Wilts BA14 7DG; Andrew Gardner, Stafford ST16 3XL; Ben Garrat, Kent DA3 8HX; Gary Joyce, Merseyside L44 6LF; Andrew King, Surrey RH6 8EY; Lance C Joyce, Leics LE3 9DF; Peter Lawrence, Bucks HP15 7FL; Ivan Li, Shrops TF4 2EX; Michael Linney, Bucks MK18 2JJ; Daniel Maggs, Anglesey LL59 5BY; Shona Milne, Aberdeen AB2 1SA, Lee Munro, Berks RG17 0DE; Simon Pickering, Kent CT12 4BU; David Richards, Lancs OL9 6BE; Barry Russell, Belfast BT11 9HQ; Chris Russell, Rotherham S63 7HG; Colin Salcombe, Glos GL3 1AS; Mark Sales, Surrey SM5 2BP; Stephen Savory, Norwich NR7 8NU; Craig Seddon, Manchester M25 6DF; Mark J Shaw, Staffs ST7 4LW; Mark D Smith, Lancs BL5 2LA; Ian M Speake, Shrops SY4 5EG; Adam Sprackling, Merseyside L43 0RA; Martin Taylor, Doncaster DN7 5JH; Jonathon Tippins, Barry, S Glamorgan; Miss F Van Toren, Rotherham S65 2RT; David Tucket, Berks SL5 8JY; Chris Wilson, Hants BH24 2PY; Jonathon Wilson, Merseyside WA12 8QA; Paul Woodrow, Stockport SK7 6EH; Lesley Young, Wilts SN4 0HA.





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Distributed
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As the might of the alien Arcadian
Empire tightens its hold on our
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organization, SAROS, gather their slender
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YOU are their last hope. Equipped with a forbidden
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A complete monthly guide by the infamous White Wizard for all 64 owners who prefer games involving typed commands rather than wiggled joysticks.

ZZAP! adventure



What a month! First there's a new Infocom game (full details below) and as if that wasn't enough Melbourne House suddenly leave us all gasping as they actually RELEASE *Lord of the Rings*! I kid you not, fellow Wizards, I actually have a copy loaded up at this very moment and you lucky lot can read all about it before going out and parting with your hard-earned Zorkmids. Then there were games from St Brides, Telarium, and Tony Treadwell . . . Oh well, I think you get the picture - mucho games, and mucho work for Ol' Whitey, who will now shut up and let you get on with it . . .



SPELLBREAKER

Infocom, £19.95 disk only

It's not often that we Wizards have the pleasure of reviewing a new **Infocom** game, but the Gods are obviously smiling on us this month, because a copy of *Spellbreaker* has just arrived in the post.

Spellbreaker is the third game in the *Enchanter* series—the previous two releases were *Enchanter* and *Sorcerer*. Ol' Whitey has never actually played *Enchanter*, but *Sorcerer* (written by Steve Meretsky) is an old favourite of mine. In fact, I would go so far as to say that it's my all-time favourite game of the 'magic-and-mystery' variety.

Spellbreaker, however, is not written by Meretsky, but on first acquaintance it appears to be equally as mesmerising. The descriptions are long and excellently written, and in the very first few seconds of the game at least four characters deliver speeches of almost a screen-full in length! They then get turned into newts, but that's another story.

The basic idea behind *Spellbreaker* is thematically similar to the first two games. Somewhere in the background lurks a hideously powerful Evil Power, who in this case is very bad news for the Frobozz Corporation. Frobozzco are purveyors of magical equipment, but the Enchanters (who are their biggest customers) are having a spot of bother with their spells. In fact, the whole spell-structure of modern society appears to be collapsing as the power ▶



of the Enchanters' magic steadily weakens. Can you stop the rot? Of course you can . . .

Well I certainly couldn't — at least not at my first sitting, anyway. *Spellbreaker* is labelled 'Expert' level by Infocom, which means that they consider it particularly difficult to crack. It's certainly in a different league to *Wishbringer* (Introductory level) and quite a bit trickier than *Sorcerer*. You find yourself having to cast spells left, right and centre, right at the beginning of the game in order to make any progress at all — and the going doesn't get any easier, believe me!

Nevertheless, Dave Lebling (co-author of *Zork* and *Enchanter*) has done an excellent job. Dave was responsible for *Suspect*, a real tour de force of character interaction, and the influence of this game can be seen at times in *Spellbreaker*, where the characters play a rather more significant role than in *Sorcerer*, for example.

Yet another Infocom masterpiece — need I say more?

Atmosphere 89%
Interaction 93%
Lasting Interest 94%
Value for money 86%
Overall 92%

NINE PRINCES IN AMBER

Telarium



The Wiz has to admit that he has never read the book upon which this game is based, but after playing the game, all I can say is that if I spot it on the shelves I'll snap it up. Author **Roger Zelazny** has followed Hitch-Hiker **Douglas Adams** into the 'interactive fiction' market and scored an undoubted hit.

The plot of the game reminds me somewhat of an old CCS title called *The Prince*. This was a multi-player game in which the adventurers had to make and break alliances in their attempts to locate a series of symbolic 'tokens', possession of which would secure them the throne.

Nine Princes in Amber sets four women and their nine brothers off on a quest for power. You take the part of Corwyn, one of the princes, and must attain your goal by allying with other members of your family. Since alliances can be broken, re-forged and betrayed at any moment during the game, you have to keep your wits about you.

In fact, the game is dominated by these processes of interaction between characters. More than half of the 140-odd verbs in the game are to do with communication, so you have DISAGREE, NOD, LAUGH, EXPLAIN, SNARL, PLACATE and many, many more to use when it comes to confrontations. The characters are so central to the game that objects take on rather less significance, though you have to learn to use words well if you are to survive.

Nine Princes in Amber has all those other touches that have distinguished recent American disk-based games, such as **Activision**'s *Mindshadow* and *Borrowed Time*. The graphics are excellent (though not quite as good as those in the Activision range) and there is music as well, both on loading and during the game.

However, it does take some getting used to, this game. Most adventurers will not be used to the large range of interaction required between characters. To help you though, there is a list of all the available verbs and, even better, there is a short demonstration game on the disk as well, which is a considerable help in getting you to grips with the way the program works.

Nine Princes in Amber is a very different game. If you're tired of wandering round collecting treasure or fighting dragons, try this instead. You will find your fellow men and women a darn slight trickier to deal with than Balrogs, I



THE SNOW QUEEN

St Brides,

St Brides have already perplexed, frustrated and amused many of my fellow Wizards with their tales of strange goings-on at the St Brides School in County Donegal. Now Marianne Scarlett (Miss) and her colleagues have turned out a version of the **Hans Christian Anderson** fairy tale, *The Snow Queen*.

This game makes a rather interesting comparison with the two games we've just looked at. Like these, it's an adaptation of a work of fiction, but the confines of **The Quill** (with which it was written) and the fact that it is cassette-based, obviously pose limitations.

The limitations are really on style as much as content. Both *Nine Princes* and *Perry Mason* try to live up to the originals by putting you 'inside' the characters concerned. The *Snow Queen*, like other British adventures, doesn't go in for much character interaction (though you can, and should, kiss your grandmother), but instead tries to recreate scenes from the original story, together, of course, with some puzzles to solve and objects to find.

The story of *The Snow Queen* is simple. Gerda's childhood sweetheart has fallen under an evil enchantment, with a sliver of glass from a magical mirror embedded in his heart. Held in thrall by the Snow Queen, he can only be rescued by young Gerda, who sets out to find him and release him from the spell.

The Snow Queen is a Quill/Illustrator production and the graphics are quite competently done. The game itself I found quite difficult and had to resort to a hint sheet even in the first few locations. You don't necessarily have to know the original story to succeed, but it certainly helps you get your bearings.

Those of you who like fairy tales will probably get a reasonable amount of enjoyment out of this release, but I hasten to add that I think many adventurers, accustomed to more blood-thirsty fare, may find it lacking in excitement. The original magic of Hans Anderson's story is undeniable, but how well it survives in binary medium is open to question.

Atmosphere 72%
Interaction 59%
Lasting Interest 62%
Value for Money 55%
Overall 60%



warrant you. You start off in a hospital bed with both legs in plaster and a burly doctor coming towards you with a hypodermic. You need to resort to violence here before you can get anywhere — and believe me it isn't easy!

My only criticism about this game is the slow disk accessing. In one case, after entering the simple command WAIT, the disk whirred for nearly 30 seconds before giving me the message: 'You wait patiently . . .' Well, maybe I do, but I wish I didn't have to.

Minor quibbles like that aside, this is an excellent game. The parser isn't that brilliant, but once you get used to it you will find that the gameplay is very complex and quite absorbing — and the location descriptions aren't bad either. Different, but refreshingly so.

Atmosphere 78%
Interaction 83%
Lasting Interest 85%
Value for Money 76%
Overall 83%

TROLL BOUND

Questline, £2.99 cass



Semi-Wizard **Tony Treadwell** is known to many readers of this column, as he runs a popular adventure club and is always ready to give help and assistance to other followers of the Wand-ering Path. Now Tony has taken his life in his hands and written a game himself. How has he done and what lessons can you learn from his attempt, should you ever decide to try and release a game yourself?

The first thing he's done is turn the usual state of adventuring on its head. Instead of doing battle with Trolls and Goblins, you ARE one — in this case you are Gonj, one of the 'Green People' who were, long ago, friends of the human race, but must now hide away for fear of discovery and destruction.

Tony's blurb claims about 90 locations for his game, which loads in two parts. On the first side of the cassette there's an introduction, together with some music and a picture of Gonj's dwelling place. My immediate impression was mainly shaped by the number of spelling mistakes — I hope this wasn't a production copy, Tony, because you will have to fix them before it goes on sale! Spelling is one of those little things that one often overlooks in a game, but any commercial software house will tell you how important it is.

In fact spelling is just one facet of that 'inner logic' that any good adventure must have. Despite the interest of the story, this inner logic must be present for a game to be really enjoyable. Unfortunately, in the version of Tony's game that I saw, it was often absent. For example, once you've boned up on the history of the 'Green People', you find yourself sitting in your hole, where you can see a 'large wooden chest'. If you try to open it, you find it's 'rusty'. Hmmm — wooden chests don't rust (though their hinges might, I suppose). Little niggles like this, coupled with the frequent spelling ▶

mistakes, tend to weaken the atmosphere of even the best-planned game.

At times, *Troll Bound* falls over slightly. The text-formatting is sometimes slightly askew and there was even one rather major bug — a torch that I needed couldn't be 'got', thereby causing much annoyance and frustration since it was clearly there for the taking. My only other major gripe is that the vocabulary doesn't appear to include either EXAMINE or LOOK.

Like a number of games, Tony's doesn't tell you which word it's having difficulty with and simply replies: 'You try, but cannot do that', or words to that effect. This is a pity, because (as I've often said) it's a great help to know exactly which words you're misusing. *Troll Bound* does, however, adopt the enjoyable practice of varying its responses, so we get 'I await you, Oh great green one' and 'What next, oh smelly one?' as prompts for input.

Troll Bound has some very original locations and the game is reasonably priced at £2.99. However, before you order a copy, I suggest you ask Tony whether or not he's corrected all the spelling mistakes! If those (and the torch bug I mentioned) are fixed, then this looks like another of those 'amateur' games that, if not up to the standard of some of today's commercial releases, can at least offer some enjoyment to the dedicated adventurer.

Atmosphere 70%
Interaction 50%
Lasting Interest 58%
Value for Money 55%
Overall 59%

PERRY MASON — THE CASE OF THE MANDARIN MURDER

Telarium, £19.95 disk only

Just as I'd finished getting one up on my brothers in *Amber*, I found myself defending Laura Kapp in court. **Telarium** seem to be concentrating on adapting programs from well-known works of fiction at the moment and since **Erle Stanley Gardner** has always been one of my favourite writers, I was looking forward immensely to this 'interactive' version of one of his best-known books.

Like *Nine Princes*, *Perry Mason* comes on two disks in a smart package with plenty of documentation. Unusually, the instructions contain a complete vocabulary listing for the game, which tots up to nearly 800 words. Far from spoiling the fun, I found the listing a great help — most of the puzzles in the program involve heavy brain-duty and on these occasions the last obstacles one wants to overcome are those caused by a limited, or uncertain, vocabulary.



The plot of the game is perfectly straightforward. Your pal, Laura Kapp, has been arrested for murder. Hardly surprising, since she was found in a state of shock five inches from the gun that had just shot her husband. As good old Pee-Wee, you must take on her case and defend her in court. There are three ways out: either you fail, and she goes to the chair; you succeed in convincing the jury that she's innocent; or you both get her off AND nail the real villain responsible.

The great strength of Erle Stanley Gardner's books lies in their meticulous (and well-informed) descriptions of court procedures. Almost all his works end up in court and the reader is treated to a highly lifelike, and beautifully observed, courtroom sequence that ends with Mr Mason confounding everyone with his brilliant legal mind, and unmasking the truth for all to see.

Telarium's game obviously seeks to mimic this aspect of Gardner's work. Much of it actually takes place in court and the player has to indulge in some quite complex legal duelling. Luckily, the documentation that comes with game is pretty comprehensive and even includes a little 'lawyers' exam paper' for you to test yourself! Although it's strange at first, you soon find yourself cross-examining, raising objections and challenging witnesses in a way calculated to arouse the admiration of even the most hard-boiled jury.

Basically, whereas *Nine Princes* involves manipulating characters, *The Mandarin Murder* has you manipulating evidence — and boy! Is there enough of it. You can visit Kapp's apartment to search his belongings, go to jail to question his widow, or just skip the whole investigation scene and go straight to court and start the trial.

Progress in the game is slightly fragmentary. You frequently have to 'press any key' to load in a new section (especially when moving between locations), but these interruptions are compensated by the sheer volume of material you have to sift through at each stage of your inquiry.

Aided by your faithful accomplice, Della Street, and your tame detective, Paul Drake, you should get quite a kick out of solving this



mystery. The music and graphics are excellent, though again not quite up to **Activision**'s standards. Definitely recommended to all whodunnit fans and frustrated lawyers alike.

Atmosphere 85%
Interaction 88%
Lasting Interest 87%
Value for money 81%
Overall 87%






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LORD OF THE RINGS

Melbourne House, £15.95 cass

It's here! Blow me down with a Balrog, I never thought I'd see the day. But here I am, sitting at my trusty 64, watching the Pavloda stripes loading **Melbourne House**'s latest blockbuster. So what's it like, then?

Well Wizards, I have mixed news for you. You may recall that when I previewed *Lord of the Rings* I was concerned by the speed at which the game ran, or rather crawled. The bad news is that the Commodore version certainly isn't faster than any of the others and I'm even inclined to think that it's a wee bit slower . . .

Kicking off in the the first location, you have to wait nearly half a minute while the program first draws a rather uninspiring picture, then prompts you to hit return before printing the location description! This isn't necessarily the worst case either (although location description number one is particularly long). Another location I encountered took an astonishing one and three-quarter minutes to process! In fact, in this last instance, I would suggest that there is a bug at work somewhere. If you enter a dark location without light, you may find yourself in difficulties. You have been warned!

As far as the game itself is concerned, I have nothing but praise, though I have to admit that I have not yet finished the first part. The program comes on two cassettes and is accompanied by the book **Fellowship of the Ring** (first of the **Tolkien** trilogy). This isn't superfluous, as there are a number of occasions in the game when you need information from the book. Tolkien fans will obviously applaud this faithfulness to the original, but I'm not so sure that it's a good idea. *The Hobbit*, for example, did not require you to have any more than a cursory idea of the original, but in *Lord of the Rings* you will find that doing your homework is quite important, especially as far as names and aliases are concerned.

Apart from the innovations which I mentioned in the preview (especially the ability to 'become' any one of the four Hobbits), the other thing I particularly like about the game is its logical design. Right near the beginning you are faced with the problem of crossing a river by ferry, which can only be done by careful use of your companions. Indeed, all the obstacles I have yet encountered have a pleasingly logical solution and don't depend on obscure magic spells or the right combination of mystical objects.

I also like the way time is handled in the game — with the exception of the time it takes to work it all out. For example, when you start the adventure, Merry is absent and in another location. If you get there in time, you find him. But if you're late, all you get is a note telling you how he waited for you, but has now gone on ahead! It's little touches like these that make the game enjoyable despite the occasional annoyance and the slow pace.

There are a large number of locations to explore, many of which are simply there for the atmosphere. The Wiz approves of this approach entirely — I have never been one for 'a puzzle in every place'. I like to be able to do a bit of aimless wandering on my travels, provided that there's a reasonable degree of interest in the places I visit. The other nice thing about the game is that, depending on timing, there are occasionally different ways of approaching different puzzles. For example, if you dilly-dally at the beginning, you have to take short-cuts later on to avoid the Black Riders, whereas if you get on quickly you find yourself being able to take roads that were previously impassable.

The characters in the game appear to be far more intelligent than those in other recent adventures and are certainly a far cry from those in *The Hobbit*. Even so, they do occasionally make obscure statements when spoken to. However, you will find that the need to communicate with your fellows is all-important if you are to get anywhere in the game.

Lord of the Rings is a large, ambitious game. The blurb claims over 200 locations and I haven't visited nearly that many yet (about 100 at the last count). Apart from the occasional bug (like the dark location mentioned earlier), the very slow pace and the need to reload data from cassette if you QUIT or die, I found myself becoming more and more involved in Tolkien's world. I am inclined to think that this is more of a tribute to Tolkien than to Melbourne House, but nevertheless I feel this is a game I can safely recommend to the more wealthy Wizards among us.



Atmosphere 86%
Interaction 85%
Lasting Interest 87%
Value for Money 81%
Overall 85%

THE WHITE WIZARD'S MAILBAG

Letters galore this month, not to mention the frenzied pleas on Micronet and BT Gold. Interestingly, the nitty-gritty of the postbag this time seems to be the use of disk drives. When the Wiz first started this column back in (gasp) 1985 disk-owning wizards were definitely in the minority, but in the last few months I've noticed an increasing number of correspondents inquiring about disk-based games.

'I recently bought a disk-drive,' writes **Darren Cooper** of Aylesford, 'and decided to treat myself to a couple of disk adventures. Is there a chance of you doing a feature on the best disk-drive adventures in a forthcoming issue?'

Well, I'll certainly consider it, Darren, but in the meantime keep an eye on these pages because we tend to review disk-based games every month now, and they are of course rated just like any other game so that you can see which ones the Wiz particularly recommends. However, it's worth pointing out that I do apply rather higher standards when judging disk-based adventures — a game that would be 'just about OK' on cassette would receive lower marks if it were available on disk only. Disks offer obvious advantages for adventures (witness Infocom, for example) and any disk-based game that doesn't make use of those advantages is not going to be viewed with favour.

Another new disk-owner is **Sanjay Keswani** of London. '*Mindshadow* was the first disk adventure I've ever played. I immensely enjoyed solving this game, and if most disk adventures are as good as this, then BOY! I know I'm in for a fantastic time. When I finished *Mindshadow*, I started playing the *Tracer Sanction*, and found it rather easy . . . '

Well, Sanjay, there are indeed many disk-adventures as good as, or even better than, *Mindshadow*. My own personal favourite, which I would recommend to any adventurer, experienced or not, is *Suspect* from Infocom. This is a modern whodunnit with the player in a race against time and the police, but if you'd prefer a more traditional sorcery and spells type game then go for Infocom's *Sorcerer* — a truly excellent adventure of its kind. Not that Infocom have the monopoly of good disk-based games — you could do worse than try Activision's *Borrowed Time* (reviewed in the last issue).

Will Blake also wanted me to recommend some adventures, but ones without any 's****ing elves and gnomes and so on . . . My problem is one of inexperience as much as anything. I always enjoy computer adventures but usually find them too frustrating to persevere with due to the illogical nature of some of the problems I've encountered. Level 9's *Return to Eden*, for example — planting bricks to grow houses — come on! It ain't logical!'

Well, Will, I agree with you — but it's all a matter of personal taste and some people find such puzzles the very stuff of life itself. If you or anyone else wants something a little more logical then I suggest you try *The Worm in Paradise* (Level 9) or *Valkyrie 17* (Ram Jam Corporation). The latter is particularly noteworthy for its 'real-world' scenario, though I didn't approve of finding Piranhas in a European fountain!

Steve Bird of Nonington is stuck on *Valhalla*. So, to be honest, is the Wiz, who still has a copy lying on his shelf but hasn't actually succeeded in finishing it yet. Anyone out there got a complete solution they could send me? I'll then publish parts of it for those in need.

Andrew Leighton of Accrington is another Wizard trying desperately to save up for a disk-drive, or so he says. He also wants to know why we publish so few tips for games each month. Well, Andrew, to be honest I've always felt that the importance of tips columns is slightly over-rated. I prefer to concentrate on publishing the names and addresses of people who can help you when you're in difficulty, because I think this approach helps to foster the comradeship so necessary to successful adventuring. However, I take note and shall do my best to include some more tips in future.

Finally, I had a lot of mail (predictably!) about the printing errors in the Christmas issue that confused the various adventure games and their respective descriptions. So we had 'Zork I,II,III — a Quilled story of naughty girls', a description which should, of course, have been given to The Secret of St Brides. 'I suggest', suggests **Tommo** of Cleethorpes, 'that you hire a cleric and allow him to do a 'remove curse' on your staff — and also that you have a swift look at your own protective pentacles'. I shall indeed.

This month's Timely Tips . . .

As usual, the Wiz has been inundated with cries for help this month — despite my plea to fellow Magicians that I cannot answer such missives personally. The truth is that if I were to sit down and pen a reply to everyone who wrote in from the Goblins Dungeon, let alone all the other locations you're stuck in, I'd never have to time to eat, let alone write this column.

However, I'll always do my best to relate the tips given here to your queries. And of course there are always those brave Wizards and Witches in Clever Contacts who can help if need be.

For this month's tips I am indebted to **R B Treviss**, **Fred Flowerday** (The Hoopiest Frood), and of course my humble self . . .

Erik the Viking
Maze trouble? Try NENWWSS
Open S

Eureka Roman
Soothsayer requires eggless chicken
Say Ave Caesar to old Fiddlesticks

Eureka Germany
Use bayonet to avoid mines

Eureka Prehistoric
Deserted? SE S Drinkies S S

Hitchikers
Can't do anything once on ship? Use your nose.
Can't think of anything to do on Zaphod's ship? Turn your hearing aid up!

Wild West
Oh boy, there have been quite a few writing in about this one! Try the following for starters . . .
3 1 3 1 2 1 2 3 3 1 — and that's all the help you're getting!

Never Ending Story
If you can't get to part 2, you obviously haven't tried blowing the horn. Even then, you'll have to fly, and make sure you've got some glass with you!



CLEVER CONTACTS

Come all ye faithful, joyful, and triumphant! This is the page where adventurers all over the world can get together and pass on the valuable experience they have gained on their travels. If you've finished a game (or games — clever clogs) and want to go down in history as one of the Chosen Few, then let me know! Write to the **White Wizard's Dungeon, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB**. All details on a postcard please. If you're writing requesting help, then please be aware that I may not always be able to find room for your request on these pages. The best course of action by far is to get in touch with one the adventurers listed below offering help on the game you're stuck on. The White Wizard may be immortal, ingenious, and big-headed, but he's only human and can't answer every letter he receives. If you have a modem, you can contact me on Prestel. My mailbox number is **919994854**. Telecom Gold subscribers can reach me on **83:JNL251**.

Club Help Offered

The Quèstline Adventure Club is still running strong in Oxford. **Tony Treadwell** — the first man ever to be nominated a demi-Wizard by Ol' Whitey (back in the days of the first ZZAP! issues) — will endeavour to help on all matters magical, vegetable, and mineral. Questline also appears on **Compunet** and **Micronet**, so you can catch them there if you have a modem. For free membership and a newsletter (very informative and packed with tips) send an SAE to: **Questline, 17 Headley Way, Headington, Oxford. Tel (0865) 68637**.

Adventureline, run by **Roger Garret**, is still alive and kicking, despite rumours to the contrary. However, Roger is no longer contactable on the 'phone, so letters only please to **Adventureline, 52 Micawber Way, Chelmsford, Essex, Tel (0245) 442098**. Please note that membership (plus newsletter) costs £1.00.

If there are any other clubs out there in the big, wide world and you wish to enrol the White Wizard's readers through these pages then write in with full details and samples of any newsletters, membership cards, badges, gold bars, etc. to me. Readers will, however, appreciate that I am unwilling to publicise clubs unless I have good evidence that my beloved readers are going to get good value from them, and aren't wasting their stamps and hard-earned guilders in sending off for membership.

Help Offered

Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Catacombs, Eureka, Hulk, Spiderman, Munroe Manor, Hobbit, Forest of Doom, Pyramid of Doom, Quest for Merravid, Holy Grail, Twin Kingdom Valley, Dungeon Adventure, Castle of Terror, Golden Baton, Perseus and Andromeda, Witches Cauldron, Classic Adventure, Arrow of Death Part 1, Pirate Adventure, Ten Little Indians, Ring of Power, Aztec Tomb Part 1, Gremlins, Jewels of Babylon
Simon Gaunt, Tel. 0302 726917 between 5pm and 9.30pm only.

Return to Eden, Red Moon, Eureka, Terrormolinos, Bored of the Rings, Doomdark's Revenge, Sherlock, Hampstead, Robin of Sherwood, Urban Upstart, Starcross, Spiderman, Hulk, Hobbit, Mindshadow, Twin Kingdom Valley, Subsunk
Ivan, 54 St Johns Road, Colchester, Essex. Tel Colchester 860597 after 4pm.

Valhalla, Waxworks, Golden Baton, Hulk, Spiderman, Snowball, Arrow of Death Parts 1 and 2, Hobbit, Hitch-hikers Guide to the Galaxy, Terrormolinos, Hampstead, Eureka
Nick Wright, 1 Eastleigh Drive, Mickleover, Derby, DE3 5HZ.

Urban Upstart, The Helm, Subsunk, Circus, Ten Little Indians, Perseus and Andromeda, Arrow of Death Part 1, Hulk, Spiderman, Adventureland, Secret Mission, Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle, Gremlins, Lords of Time, Colossal Adventure
Gavin Berry, 25 Beauvale Road, Hucknall, Nottingham, NG15 6PF Tel (0602) 635117 between 2pm and 5pm only.

Red Moon, Lords of Time, Adventure Quest, Fourth Protocol, Lords of Midnight, Hobbit, Twin Kingdom Valley, Gremlins, Hampstead, Tower of Despair, Empire of Karn, Spiderman
Sanjay Keswani, 76 Girdwood Road, London, SW18 5QT Tel 01 788 7511 not later than 9.00pm.

Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Gremlins, Hobbit, Terrormolinos
Kevin Murphy, 13 Munro Street, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY1 1PX Tel 0592 201384.

Hacker, Dragonsworld, Hampstead, Empire of Karn, Heroes of Karn
Lynn Leech, Tel 0942 606900 after 6pm and Sundays.

Heroes of Karn, Voodoo Castle, Ten Little Indians, The Lost City, Wizard of Akyrz, Quest for the Holy Grail, The Hobbit
Paul Flanagan, 6 Corry, Belleek, County Fermanagh, N Ireland.

Zork 1,2,3, Enchanter, Sorcerer, Starcross, Suspended, Planetfall, Hitch-hikers Guide to the Galaxy
Nigel Morse, 11 Green Leafe Avenue, Wheatley Hills, Doncaster, DN2 5RG Tel. Doncaster 61672 between 6pm and 8pm, weekdays only.

Eureka
Andrew Froggatt, 195 White Swan Road, Mt Roskill, Auckland 4, New Zealand.

Gremlins, Fourth Protocol, Hobbit, Empire of Karn, Snowball, Lords of Time, Red Moon, Twin Kingdom Valley, Tower of Despair, Mindshadow, Tracer Sanction, Spiderman, Adventure Quest, Lords of Midnight
Sanjay Keswani, 76 Girdwood Road, London, SW18 5QT. Tel: 01 788 7511 before 10.00pm.

The Hobbit, The Hulk, Spiderman, The Time Machine, Return to Eden
Clyde Meli, Villa Yvonne, 36 Ta'Xbiex Terrace, Ta'Xbiex, Malta

The Hobbit, Tower of Despair, Eureka, Perseus and Andromeda, Colossal Cave, Wizard of Akyrz, Munroe Manor, Fourth Protocol Part I
Geoff Wing, 171 Beadlemead, Netherfield, Milton Keynes, MK6 4HV Tel: 0908 661287

Hobbit, Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Gremlins, Terrormolinos, Never Ending Story
Kevin Murphy, 13 Munro Street, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY1 1PX Tel: 0592 201384

PLEASE NOTE: Respect your fellow adventurers. Never phone after 10.00pm (earlier if specifically mentioned above) and **ALWAYS** enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you want a reply by post.

Contacting the Wiz!

The Wiz can be contacted c/o Zzap! 64, 1-2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire. If you've got a modem, you can access him via Micronet/Prestel (Mbx no. 919994854) or BT Gold (83:JNL251).

Please note that the White Wizard cannot answer individual enquiries from lost adventurers. If you're really stuck, then try asking one of the Clever Contacts for assistance.



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WILDS

FROM YOUR 64!

With some help from the others, GARY PENN discovers that with DATEL'S new add-ons, the art of noise lies less with the singer than with the song.



So you wanna be a superstar, kid? You reckon you got what it takes? Well if you haven't, I'm sure we have. Just take a seat, do as you're told for five minutes and you'll go far. Take my word for it. OK, what's your name then? Julian Rignall, eh? Hmm, doesn't sound too convincing. Never mind, we'll work on that later . . .

With the aid of the Datel Sound Sampler hardware add on and software you can digitally record voices and sounds in the comfort of your own home, play them back and even edit them. For £49.99 (post free) you get a plastic boxful of electronic bits to stick into your user port, a microphone and an audio lead for output to either a television or an amplifier. The software comes on either disk or cassette, you decide.

The sampler is simplicity in itself to use. Just load up the software and type in a SYStem call to get a menu. From here you can sample a sound by selecting the RECORD SOUND option and speaking into the microphone. Recording is triggered by the sound level, so all you need to do is speak loud enough . . .

Right kid, this is it. Your BIG chance. What I want you to do is . . .
'Can I say something'?
No, but that's great! We'll use it! I can see this is going to work just fine! Now repeat after me: 'Hello' . . .
'Hello'?
Like it! Like it! You've got style, kid. And that's S-T-Y-L-E in big capital letters with hyphens in between.

Once you have sampled a sound it can be played back, dubbed over or, if you are feeling adventurous enough, edited through the sequencer. Here, a previously sampled sound can be disected and rearranged or played back at 25 different speeds using the keyboard. You can then record a sequence of sounds and play them back or, if the mood takes you, play back the sampled sound in a loop. Oh yes, 'scratching' is also possible . . .

'Hehehehehehello'? *Will you listen to that! Neat kid, really neat.* **'Can I say something'?** 'Can I, can I, can I say something'? *Awlright! This is IT! This is muzak! This is art! This is . . . Gonna make us a fortune — er, you too, kid. Now let's go for something a little less contrived — how about: 'Max Headroom'?*
'Max Headroom'
O-K! **'MMMMMMMax, Max, MMax Headroom, Max Headroom'.** *Love it! Looove it! How about: 'Big Time'?*
'Big Time'?
'Big Time. BBBBBig Time. Big, Big, Big Time'. *Oh wow! Right, next we'll try some echo . . .*



SOUNdS

Yes, sound can even be sampled with echo and very jolly it sounds too. Parameters such as the record/play rate and the echo effects delay can be altered for added effect . . .

'Boo'!
Nice, kid. Nice. Now let's see how that sounds: 'Boo! (Boo! Boo! Boo! Boo!) BOO! (OO! Oo! oo!)' *El slicko! Wrap it! 64 it! Now we're really rolling . . .*

Finally, there's the live effects option which allows you to speak to the world through your television. Your voice can be distorted with either reverberation or echo, the former creating a distance effect. There is also the facility to speak like a Dalek if you so desire and once again, various parameters can be altered.

Listen good, kid. This is your big chance. This is for REAL! We're gonna do some live stuff, do you think you can cope with that?
'No (oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh)'
Coolerooni! Keep it up. KEEP IT UP!
'Uh? (uh, uh, uh, uh, uh, uh, uh)'
Beaut! BE-YOOT! I can see it all now! Kids screaming for you, kid. Clawing at your clothes — your very person! All of them delirious little girls hanging on your every word, just yearning for you to open your mouth and . . We've got to go for a recording now! NOW!

Unfortunately, sampled sounds can't be saved out for future use, although you could always record them onto audio tape. This is rather annoying, since an otherwise excellent value for money package is let down by inferior software. The add on itself is superb and the sound reproduction is of the highest quality, but its potential just can't be utilised fully due to the lack of facilities, such as a waveform editor which would be very handy. However, the Datel Sound Sampler is relatively cheap and is still worth looking at (or rather listening to).

Right kid, that's it. Please don't call us — we won't call you . . .

But if sound sampling isn't your scene, how do drums of the digital variety sound? The **Datel Com-Drum** digital drum system costs £29.99 for either the disk or casette version and also consists of a hardware interface to plug into the user port. Then all you have to do is load up the software, run it and you're ready to go . . .

Well not quite, since you need a drumkit to play with. There are three provided — each must be loaded in separately and contain eight drum sounds. At your creative disposal are bass drums, snare drums, tom toms (hi and lo), cowbells, claps, hi-hats (open and closed), rims, a cymbal, a tamborine and a cabasa. These can either be played live or used to compose rhythms and ultimately 'songs'. Further 'voices' will be available on tape or disk later this year.

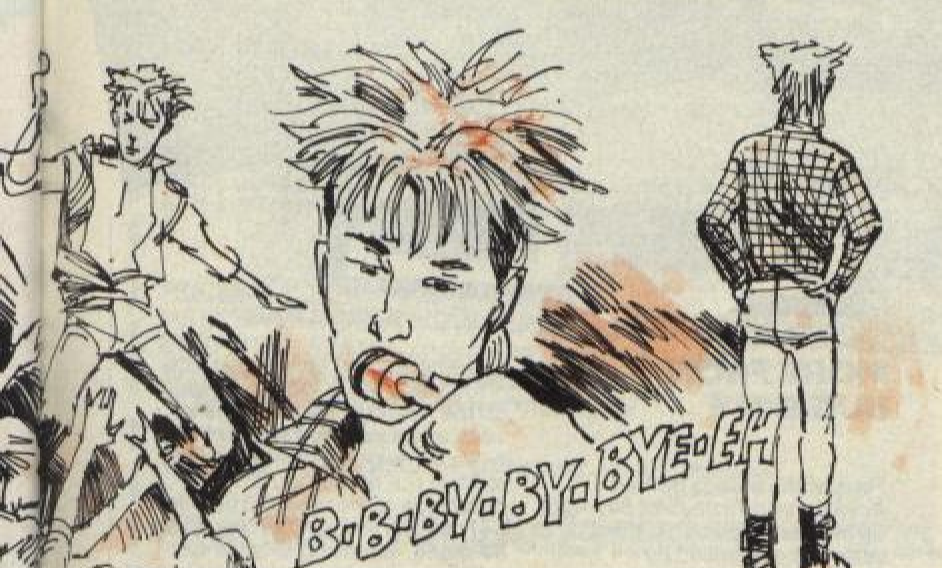
Should you choose to display your musical talent by improvising, ie playing live, there is the option of a metronome to help keep time. If, on the other hand, you prefer to be creative at a more leisurely pace you can always compose a rhythm or two. In fact up to eight different rhythm patterns can be built up and if you wish, strung together to form a 'song'. A pattern is entered by either playing it live or building it up a couple of notes at a time. Songs can then be 'written' by taking previously defined rhythm patterns and joining them together. A maximum of fifteen patterns can be used to form a song, although they can be repeated, and up to three instruments can play at once. Tempo can be adjusted in all cases. When you feel sufficiently happy with your work, it can be saved out for other appreciative ears to hear at a later date.

Although there is occasionally a 'click' at the end of some sounds, the overall quality of the drums is superb, which is hardly surprising as the hardware supplied is the same as the Sampler's. Though the software is sufficient and relatively easy to use, it could be better. However, this doesn't significantly mar an otherwise excellent package. Check it out — you shouldn't be disappointed, especially at the price.



Julian Rignall appeared only once by the kind courtesy of Lloyd Mangram Artistes Inc.

DATEL ELECTRONICS, Unit 8, Fenton Industrial Estate, Dewsbury Road, FENTON, Stoke-On-Trent
Tel: (0782) 273815





ZZAP! Flash



A screen from Rino's new Ark Pandora.



Jack Charlton (left), Mike Mahoney (centre, holding slip of paper) and Gary Penn (right, with hands thrust inside pockets) drawing the *Match Fishing* winners at the recent Earls Court Toy Fair.

GOING IN TWO BY TWO

Rino's next release (remember *Z*, their first?) is *Ark Pandora*, an icon driven arcade adventure with animated graphics, 94 screens to explore and many nasties to hinder. There's also music by Ben Daglish (see **Shadowspiel** for more information on this up and coming talent) and a screen designer supplied, which allows you to completely redefine the scenery. Now there's a novelty. As there is a copy of the game sitting in the office at this very moment, there will most certainly be a full review next month. *Ark Pandora* will be released on the 10th of March and retail at a price of £9.95 on cassette or disk.

YIE HAR!

Next month sees a full review of System 3's *International Karate*. Yes, after much delay it's finally made its way to the ZZAP! offices and very impressive it looks too. Archer Maclean did the graphics and the music is by Rob Hubbard. Both are superb, but as for the quality of game itself . . . Well, you will have to wait until the next issue for full critical appraisal.

STOP PRESS!

Infocom merge with Activision! As we go to press, we have just heard that those mega cool adventure writers, Infocom, have joined forces with Activision in an exclusive world-wide manufacturing and distribution agreement, an Activision spokesman confirmed today. Good news for Infocom adventure fans, since this should make the great interactive text-only adventures more widely available, and arouse awareness through a higher profile advertising campaign. We await with baited breath.

Ollo I and Ollo II.



MORE FROM BUG-BYTE

Fans of the arcade games *Xevious* and *Time Pilot 84* might be interested by two games soon to be released by Bug-Byte, who were recently reincarnated by Argus Press. *Mission Ollo* and *Ollo — The Final Assault*, better known as *Ollo I* and *II* respectively, are two games of similar nature to the aforementioned arcade classics.

Mission Ollo is loosely based on the *Xevious* theme and is a vertically scrolling shoot em up, with plenty of aliens and the like to blast out of the sky. On the other side of the tape will be *Ollo — The Final Assault*, a *Time Pilot 84* clone, featuring *Z* style bas-relief graphics and lots of action over a full-screen scrolling background.

Both games will be released back-to-back on one cassette at a retail price of £2.95.

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ZZAPBACK!

Back into the mist-shrouded past we go to study the scriblings of a small tribe of reviewers. In this nostalgic retrospective we analyse the conclusions of the then two-month old ZZAP! team. Have the games under scrutiny in issue two survived the test of time? Were they over or underrated? We shall see, as Gaz and Jaz cast a beady eye over their conclusions and sensationally reveal their innermost thoughts.

GAMES ZZAPBACKED:
Everyone's A Wally
International Basketball
Lode Runner
M.U.L.E.
On Court Tennis
Pitstop II
Super Pipeline II
Theatre Europe
World Series Baseball

EVERYONE'S A WALLY
Mikro-Gen

Issue two certainly saw some controversy in the ZZAP! offices. The first game guilty of stirring up conflicting emotions was the follow up to *Pyjamarama*. Featuring multicharacter control, the idea of the game is to find the combination of the local bank's safe. Each of the five characters has a job to complete before the combination is recovered. Bob Wade loved the program and reassured us that 'getting started may be frustrating, but once the tasks start to get solved you'll have hours of fun cracking each job'. Gary, too, was very enthusiastic and said 'EXTREMELY compelling'. Julian, on the other hand, didn't like the game and kicked up a fuss, but luckily his comment was 'lost' and never appeared . . .

I remember really moaning about this being a Sizzler — I thought it was really boring. The graphics are big and jolly and the multicharacter control method is a really nice idea and works very well. There's plenty of humour within the game, but really it never really made me smile.
JR

Unlike Julian, I thought that *Everyone's a Wally* was a great game and deserved the ratings. It's the best of the Wally trilogy and I thoroughly enjoyed playing it at the time.
GP

PRESENTATION	**ORIGINALITY**
76%	64%
GRAPHICS	**HOOKABILITY**
84%	66%
SOUND	**LASTABILITY**
47%	87%
VALUE FOR MONEY	
82%	

(Jaz) Personally I think it should have just missed being a Sizzler. more like an overall in the mid 70% region.

(Gaz) I reckon the ratings were just right, although I don't think it would do as well if reviewed now.

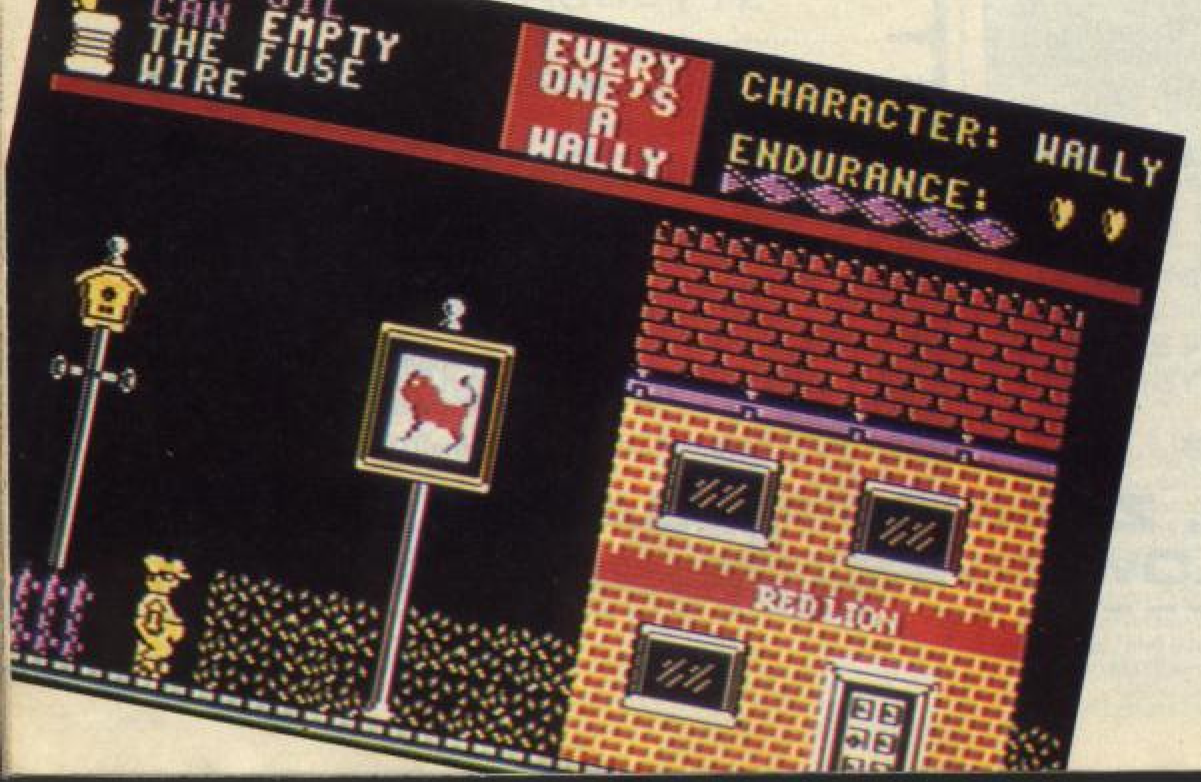
INTERNATIONAL BASKETBALL
Commodore

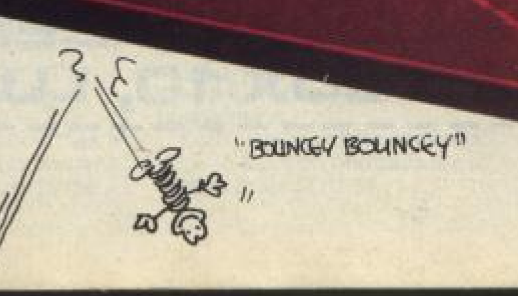
The immensely popular *International Soccer* had been out for quite some time when its follow-up arrived at the offices. Featuring excellent animation and gameplay, the game offers nine levels of computer opponents and a two player mode to keep potential basketball players going for a long time. The intrepid trio certainly enjoyed the program and Gazza Penn admitted that 'the game gripped me hard when I saw it, and it hasn't let go several weeks later'! Julian too 'loved every minute' and Bob predicted it would 'prove just as popular as *International Soccer*'.

Just like its predecessor, International Basketball *captures the spirit and atmosphere of a championship game. The game is very playable, although the top difficulty level isn't* **that** *difficult to beat. Like most games it's best playing with a human, far less predictable and far more enjoyable.*
JR









Still enjoyable to get out and play for an hour, but I agree that it's better with two players.
GP

PRESENTATION	ORIGINALITY
80%	65%
GRAPHICS	HOOKABILITY
87%	89%
SOUND	LASTABILITY
36%	87%
VALUE FOR MONEY	
92%	

(Jaz) I'm happy with the marks that we gave — although perhaps the value for money should be one or two points more.

(Gaz) Presentation should have been higher, but otherwise I think we rated it fairly.





LODE RUNNER
Ariolasoft

Despite this 150 screen platform game's crude graphics and sound, the program scores very highly on its playability. There's also a screen design facility, handy if you get bored of the game or just want to torture your friends! 'The game's sheer addiction kept my eyes propped open until the owls went to bed' was Jaz's admission. Bob: 'this will be a classic for a long time to come'. Gazza's nicely put summing up sentence told the world that 'some screens are amazingly difficult.'

The cassette version of this was a bit of a pain to load, I still enjoyed playing this immensely challenging game. The graphics and sound ARE very primitive, but the program is great fun to play. I never used the screen designer, but Gary knocked up a very difficult ZZAP! 64 screen quite quickly.
JR

I thought *Lode Runner* was brilliant at the time and in fact still regard it as a decent game. It's great fun to play and is one of the best platform derivatives ever. Unfortunately, it didn't sell at all. Never did know why.
GP

PRESENTATION	ORIGINALITY
82%	38%
GRAPHICS	HOOKABILITY
39%	89%
SOUND	LASTABILITY
34%	94%
VALUE FOR MONEY	
88%	

(Jaz) I think the presentation was underrated — there are loads of options. Perhaps we overrated it slightly? I feel that 80% would have been more fitting to the overall percentage, but it's still one of the better platform games.

(Gaz) Agreed, presentation was underrated, but I don't think we overrated the game as a whole — the marks were fine.

M.U.L.E.
Ariolasoft

More controversy was stirred up in the ZZAP! offices by this pure trading game. In this one to four player game the players are dumped on the planet Irata (read that backwards) and have to buy plots of land, then tap and market the produce. Plenty of crises arise during the game, and there are some pretty fast trading sequences. Gary and Bob liked the game, but Julian muttered, 'I played the game in the hope of excitement, I found little.' Gary recommended it to 'both novice and skilled traders alike,' and Bob thought that it 'should interest a wide range of people, giving plenty to do in a well presented program.'

The only good thing about this game is the tune — it's a really excellent number. I still think the game is boring, although I can see that it has much to offer people who like this sort of thing.
JR

Worth bearing in mind that by today's rating standard, this wouldn't make a Sizzler, but it does offer a lot of involvement and stands up well a year later — especially the music.
GP

PRESENTATION	ORIGINALITY
91%	64%
GRAPHICS	HOOKABILITY
44%	72%
SOUND	LASTABILITY
62%	86%
VALUE FOR MONEY	
81%	

(Jaz) I suppose the marks are pretty fair, after all as a trading game it is very good.

(Gaz) Sound should have been about 20% higher, but the other ratings seem okey doke.



PITSTOP II
US Gold/Epyx

One player against the computer or two players simultaneously battling against one another over a series of Grand Prix circuits caused the young team to froth with *Pitstop II*. Pitstops, refuelling and changing the tyres are all part and parcel of this excellent simulation. '*Pitstop II* is a truly stunning and innovative arcade game and should prove to set new standards in the race game approach.' Bob admitted that 'my joystick hand is killing me, but boy is it worth it,' while Gary's 'fantastic' paved the way for a very enthusiastic comment.

I still think this is THE best racing game around. Its excellent graphics and high playability, especially with two players, makes this one of my favourites. It certainly proved to be popular amongst you readers too, and it's still riding high in the ZZAP! charts a year later.
JR

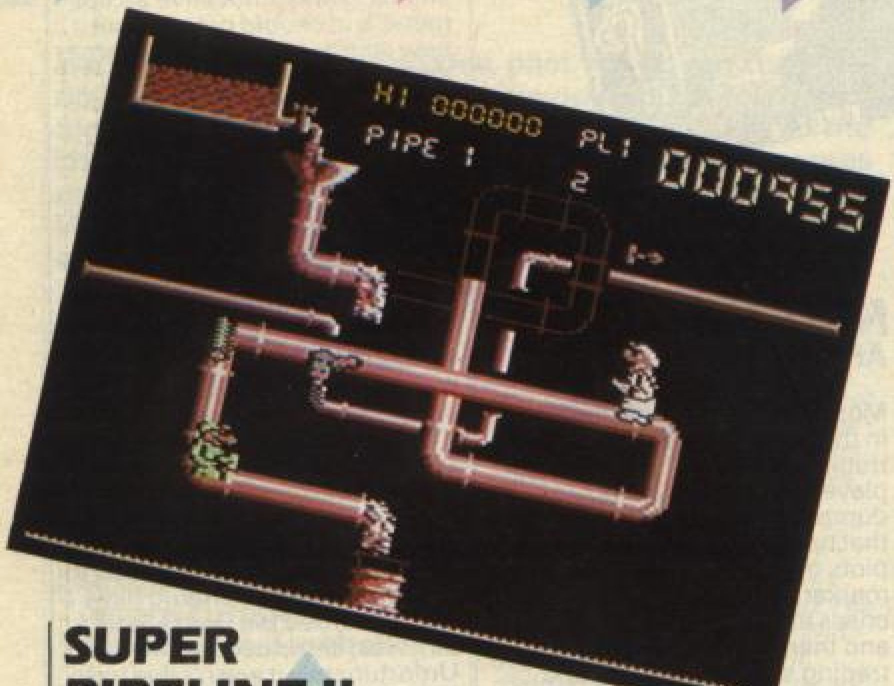
I couldn't agree more — *Pitstop II* is a classic game and I reckon it was underrated. It should have been awarded the Gold Medal as it was, and indeed is, brilliant. Unfortunately it wasn't due to an Editorial discrepancy. Shame that.
GP

PRESENTATION	ORIGINALITY
87%	54%
GRAPHICS	HOOKABILITY
90%	95%
SOUND	LASTABILITY
71%	91%
VALUE FOR MONEY	
89%	

(Jaz) This is still underrated in my opinion, around 93/94% overall would make me feel happier.

(Gaz) Presentation up slightly to somewhere in the low nineties and lastability and overall, well into the nineties.





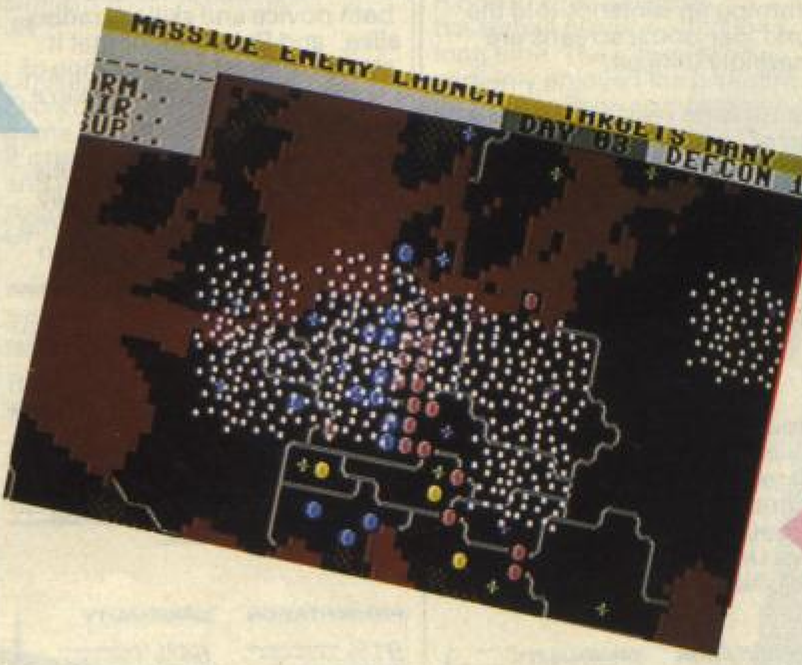
SUPER PIPELINE II
Task Set

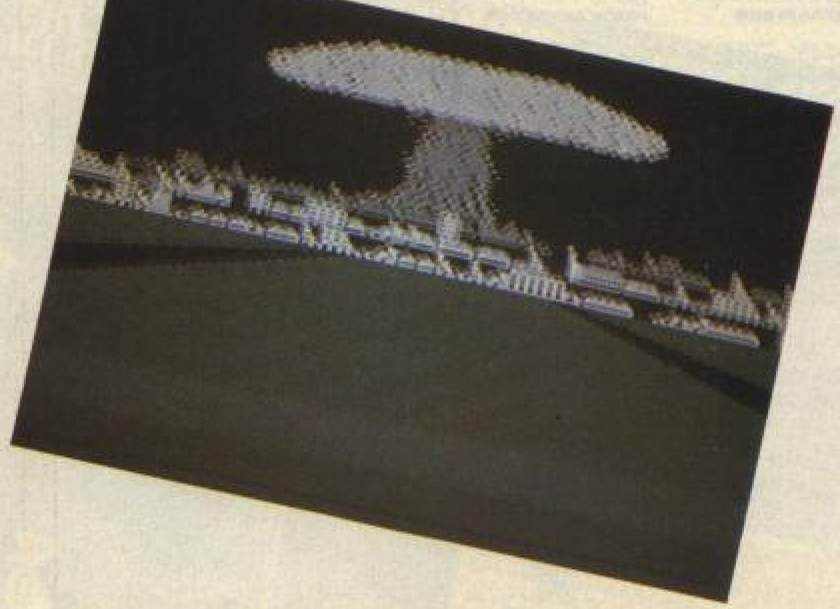
The follow-up to *Super Pipeline* in fact proved to be an improved version of the original. The new features included a cartoon strip between screens, two workmates to help you and some excellent new nasties. The object of the game is to defend a series of pipes from the marauding nasties, who try to break them. Fast and furious action combined with humour certainly makes it an appealing game. Gary commented 'it's tough and enjoyable enough to keep a wide range of arcade gamesters busy. Bob, hand waving emphatically from his chest, raved 'You're in for a real treat.' 'Supersmooth, slick graphics and catchy tunes instantly attract,' said Julian.

It was great fun, although like most arcade games, it only has short term appeal. A very jolly game, and the cartoon bits are really funny.
JR

I thought the original *Super Pipeline* was good, but Task Set improved upon it immensely and this follow up was much better. Fun to play although it did prove monotonous with such little variety.
GP

PRESENTATION	**ORIGINALITY**
88% Very, very slick. Great cartoon interludes between screens.	32% The basic idea is the same as in Super Pipeline.
GRAPHICS	**HOOKABILITY**
87% Arcade quality. Great animation and detail. Many humourous touches.	93% Very powerful addiction sets in instantly.
SOUND	**LASTABILITY**
82% Four different pieces of great, catchy music plus other good effects.	87% 16 screens of increasing difficulty, the last few VERY hard.
VALUE FOR MONEY	
88% State of the art arcade game. Enormous appeal whether or not you've already got Pipeline!	





(Jaz) I think the lastability rating was a bit steep, mid seventies would be better. The rest of the marks down by 5 to 10%, it has aged a little.

(Gaz) Lastability down to high seventies and value for money around the same.

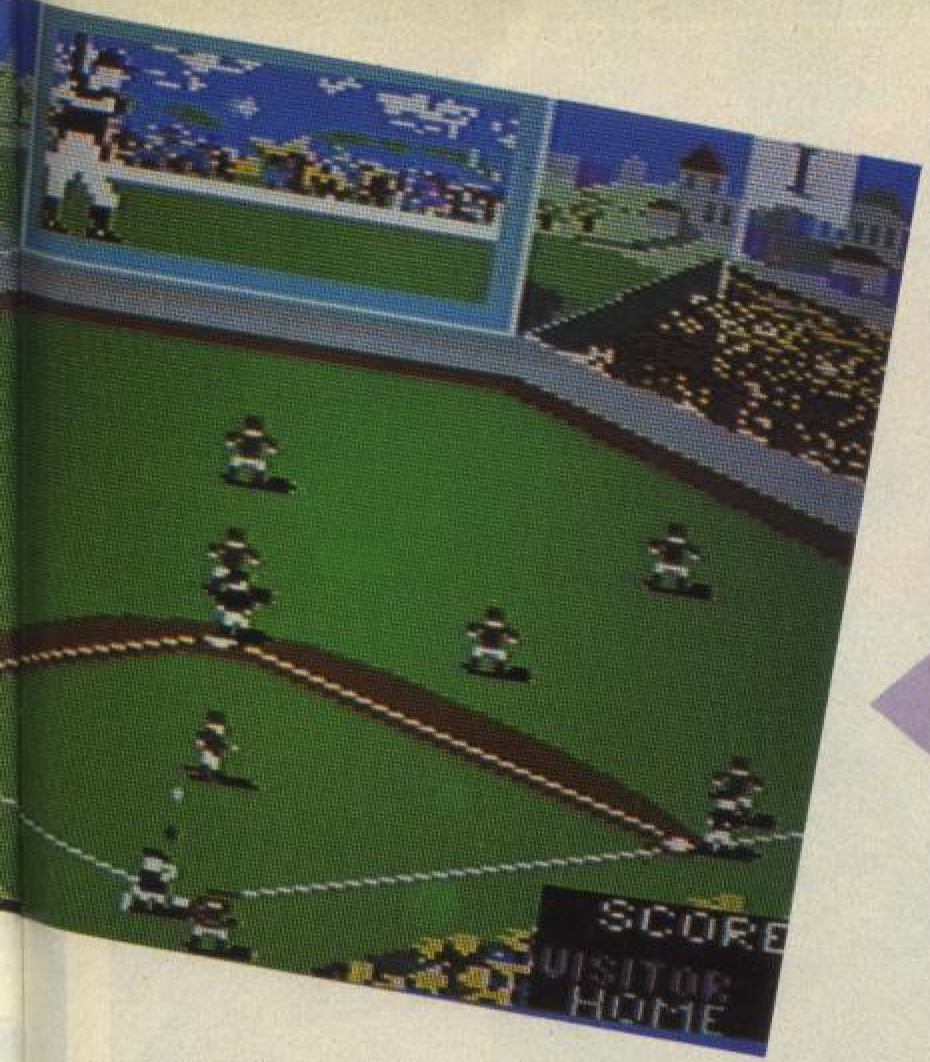
THEATRE EUROPE
PSS

'Cold, grim, nuclear reality' was the sobering opening line to the Gold Medal review of this classic wargame. Everyone became very serious and settled down to become either Warsaw Pact or NATO forces in this simulation of World War III. Far from glorifying a nuclear confrontation the whole idea of the game was to avoid any use of nuclear strikes against the enemy. Gazza, obviously impressed, blurted 'the atmosphere generated is incredible, and virtually unrivalled by anything else on the 64'. Overawed, Bob wrote 'this triumph of gaming and common sense should prove the most popular war game yet,' Jaz said, 'a far cry from the "blast the Commies" tone of other games'.

I distinctly remember playing this for the first time and getting all hot under the collar when it went into chemical and nuclear strike mode. Although not a particularly brilliant wargame in itself, all the various animated screens and the way it's put together add up to a classic program.
JR

On reflection this shouldn't really have been awarded a Gold Medal. While it proved very atmospheric and addictive initially, the novelty soon wore thin and I think the ratings were probably influenced by our own short lived enthusiasm. Definitely overrated, although not by much.
GP

PRESENTATION	**ORIGINALITY**
96% The large package has an excellent instruction booklet, glossy map.	84% Certainly not just another war game.
GRAPHICS	**HOOKABILITY**
71% Certainly better than most war games!	96% Be careful. The effect this game can have on you is alarming.
SOUND	**LASTABILITY**
89% Effective noises plus one of the best pieces of music ever.	95% All three levels are very different, and you can play either side.
VALUE FOR MONEY	
94% If you're strong enough to grapple with the planning game concept, you'll find this one very, very special indeed!	



(Jaz) I'm still happy with the ratings, although perhaps the lastability should be in the low eighties.

(Gaz) Sound up to low nineties, but lastability and value for money down to low and mid eighties respectively.

ON COURT TENNIS
Activision

Another product which caused the knives to be sharpened was this tennis game. Chris Anderson bought it back from Activision and raved about it. Julian and Gary, on the other hand, weren't so impressed and the sparks began to fly. Over the next few days a furious argument ensued: Chris said 'Sizzler' and the twain said 'not', but the editor had the final word and Sizzler it was. Bob, who thought the game was wonderful said that it was 'easy game to get into, bringing rapid enjoyment and great addictiveness.' Gary, rather less enthusiastic, commented on the 'pleasing atmosphere,' and Jools thought that it was 'certainly a great game.'

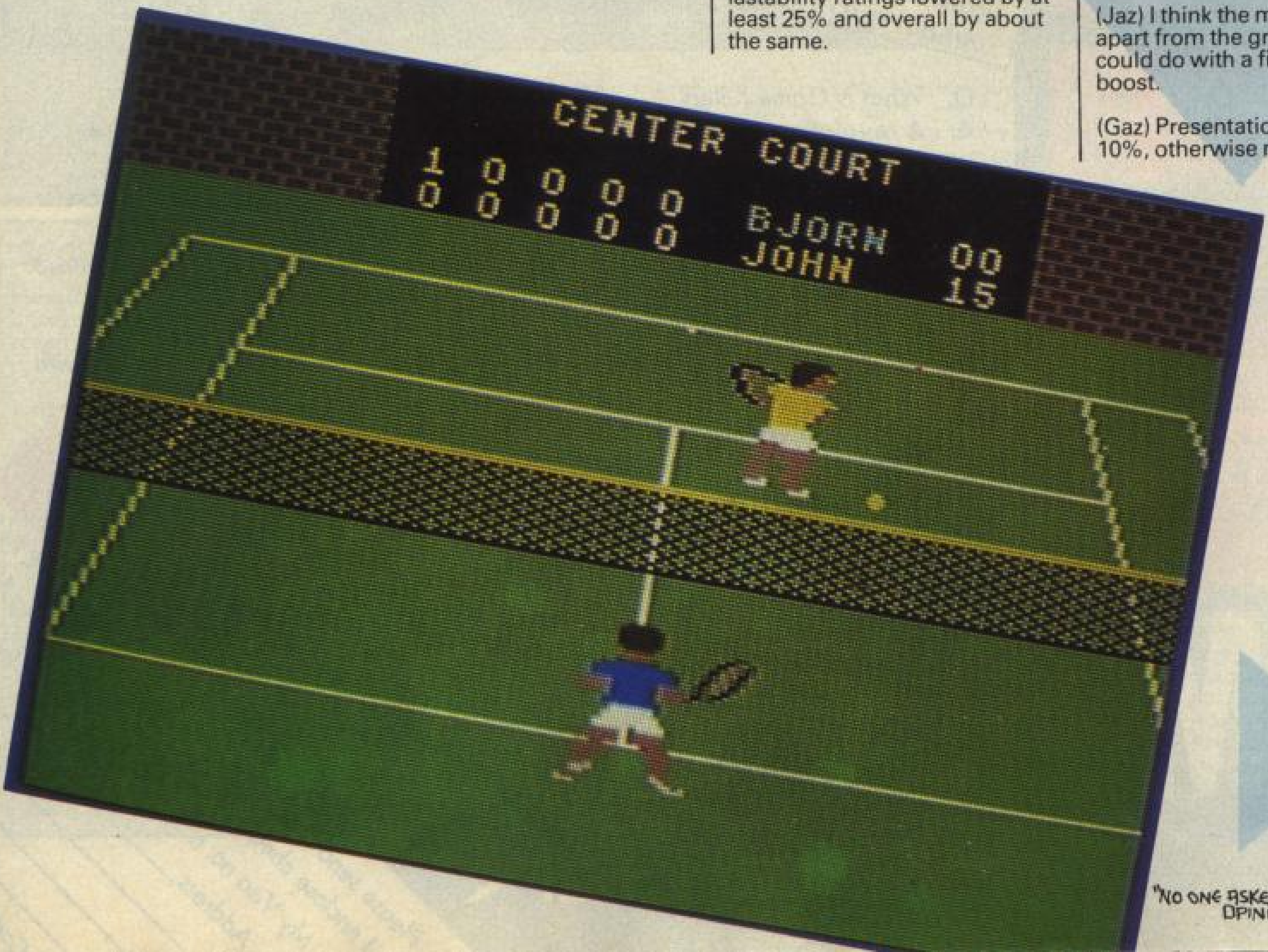
I remember the arguments very well indeed. My comment was rather less than flattering so Chris 'doctored' it, to make it look like I enjoyed the game, something which should never have been done.
JR

I virtually loathed this excuse for a tennis simulation and was disgusted by Chris Anderson's decision to make it a Sizzler, despite opposition from Julian and myself. I just didn't like the control method and found the game unrealistic and slow to play, contrary to what was said in my comment at the time. Don't know why I ended up saying what I did, but I suspect it had something to do with Chris being Editor . . .
GP

PRESENTATION	ORIGINALITY
81%	38%
GRAPHICS	**HOOKABILITY**
69%	88%
SOUND	**LASTABILITY**
66%	85%
VALUE FOR MONEY	
80%	

(Jaz) Groooo! Everything down, graphics by 10%, hook and lastability by 20%, sound by about 30% and the overall mark by about 15%.

(Gaz) I would have felt happier with both the hookability and lastability ratings lowered by at least 25% and overall by about the same.



WORLD SERIES BASEBALL
Imagine

Imagine's return to the computer industry was heralded with *World Series Baseball*, by far the better of the two baseball simulations reviewed in issue two. All three reviewers agreed on this being a Sizzler. Gaz 'loved it' and Julian regarded it an 'excellent release'. Bob, a mine of information, gave the tip 'start against a beginner friend and move up to the expert (computer) later.'

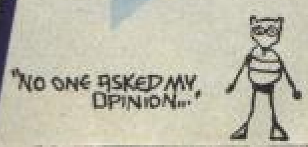
The computer opponent (not unbeatable) is a real toughie, making the game challenging and there are some really nice graphical touches to boot. Now that Hardball *has been released* WSB *has obviously been toppled from its position as the top 64 baseball simulation.*
JR

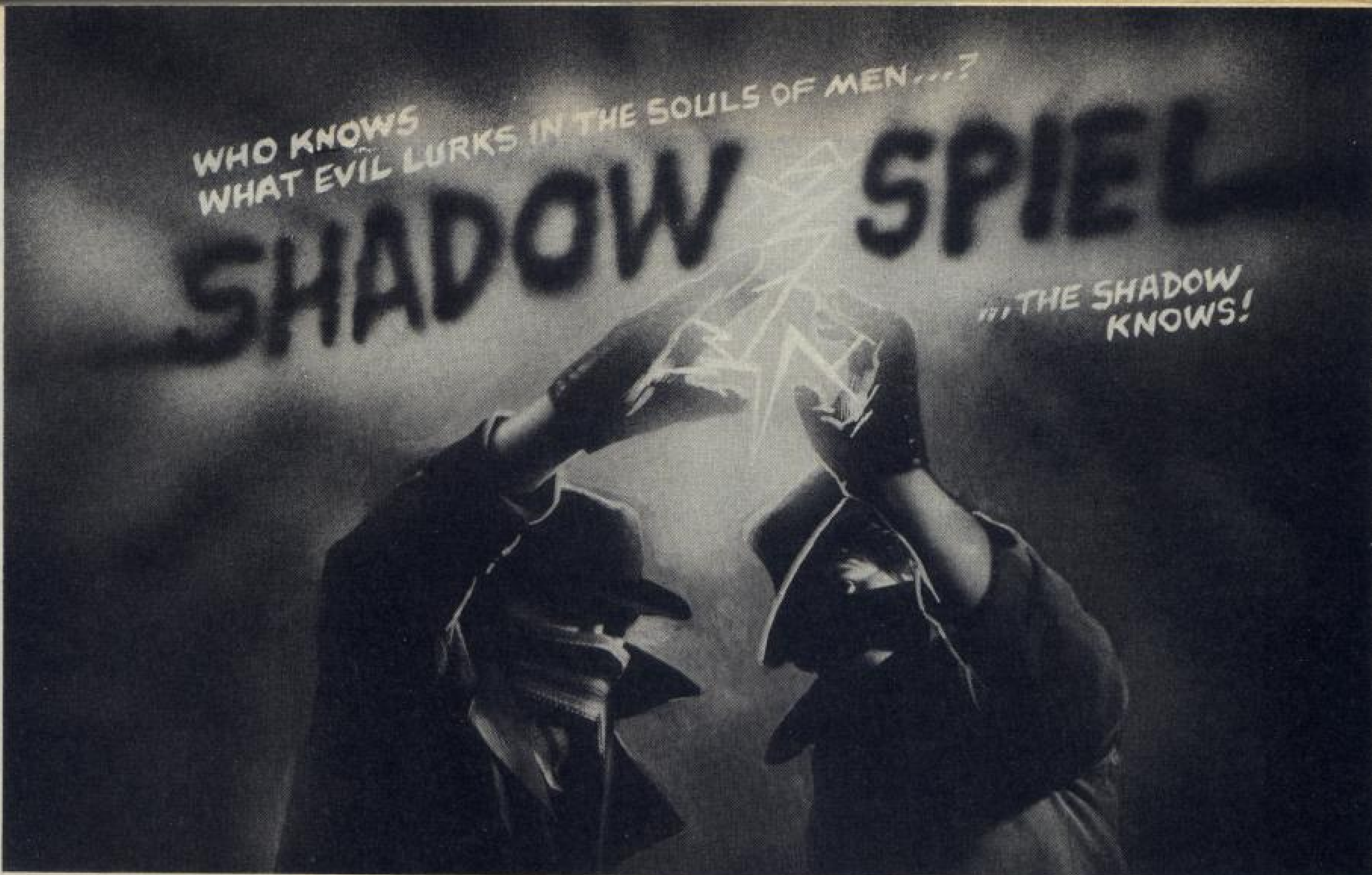
An enjoyable romp, but more of a game than a simulation. I thought the small graphics were quite neat and I liked the overall appearance, in fact I still do. I remember there was some deliberation as to which of the two baseball games reviewed should be the Sizzler. As far as I'm concerned there was no contest — it was easily this one.
GP

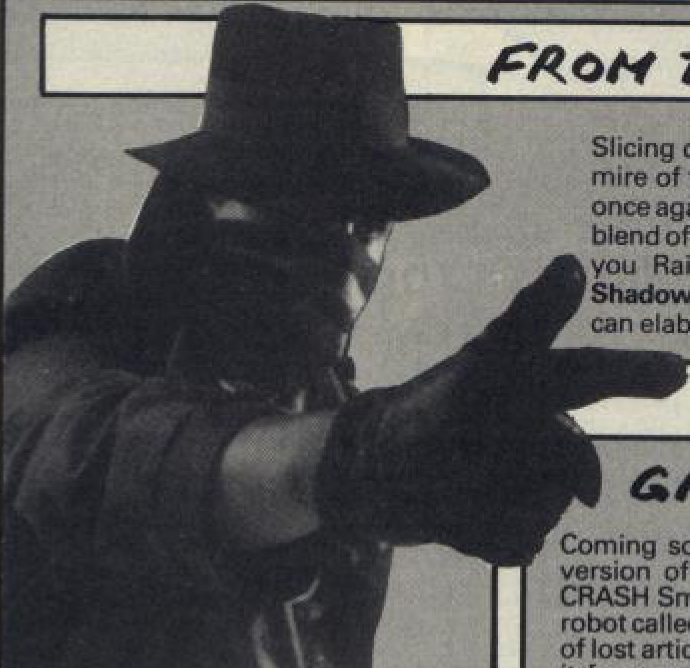
PRESENTATION	ORIGINALITY
71%	74%
GRAPHICS	**HOOKABILITY**
73%	88%
SOUND	**LASTABILITY**
59%	86%
VALUE FOR MONEY	
87%	

(Jaz) I think the marks are fine, apart from the graphics which could do with a five percent boost.

(Gaz) Presentation up by about 10%, otherwise no complaints.





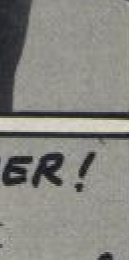


FROM THE PENUMBRAL PEN...

Slicing dauntlessly through the truth concealing mist and mire of the software industry today, **The Shadow** returns once again to bring truthseekers everywhere their monthly blend of miracle and mayhem. Only **The Shadow** can bring you Rainbird's Tony Rainbird saying 'crap'. Only **The Shadow** can forgive such an outburst. Only **The Shadow** can elaborate with any coherency . . .

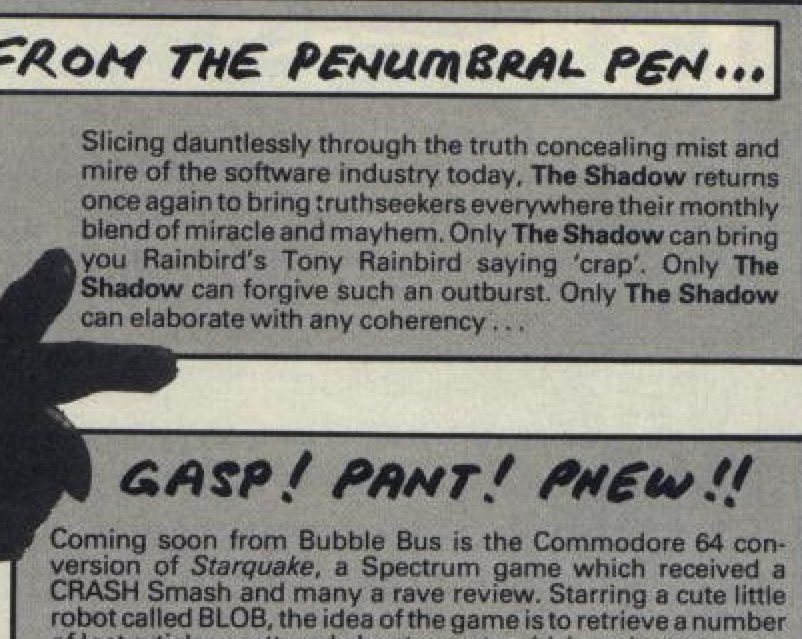
SPOT THE VOUCHER!

Though *Elite* on the Commodore seemingly led a rather charmed life, ZZAP! went as far as to call it 'Game of a Lifetime'. Its Amstrad counterpart is not so lucky though — somehow Firebird managed to manufacture 15,000 faulty copies of the game and 6,000 were sold. To compensate for the error, Firebird decided to issue two pound vouchers, redeemable on any of their products, to anybody returning a faulty copy of Amstrad *Elite*. **The Shadow** feels that such incompetence should be rewarded and awards this month's Rubber Fish of Stupidity to Firebird. In fact one man in particular: Mr Colin Fuidge. Colin, your prize awaits you . . . ...



GASP! PANT! PHEW!!

Coming soon from Bubble Bus is the Commodore 64 conversion of *Starquake*, a Spectrum game which received a CRASH Smash and many a rave review. Starring a cute little robot called BLOB, the idea of the game is to retrieve a number of lost articles scattered about an asteroid, in order to prevent it from crashing into a black hole and causing a *Starquake* which would destroy the whole universe. Gasp! The task is not an easy one due to the enormity of the map and unlike many games of this type and size, the underground caverns making up the main map are not very repetetive at all. Bubble Bus have allowed **The Shadow** an exclusive glimpse, so . . . Feast your eyes!



A DROPPING FROM ON HIGH...

A rumour filters through the smog to the ears of *The Shadow* that Firebird's sister software house, Rainbird, coughed up £100,000 for a game called *Reach for the Moon*. This would be all good and well if it was a quality product, but apparently it isn't and Telecom's finest have decided not to release this 'white elephant' after all. When asked to qualify this rumour, Mr Tony Rainbird said: 'That's a load of crap and you can quote that. Otherwise I have no comment to make about *Reach for the Moon*'. How very strange. Watch this space for further enlightenment

HOT BIKE ACTION...

Gifted with the incredible ability to both listen and talk to Mastertronic's Alison Beasley, **The Shadow** was pleasantly surprised to learn that

HOT BIKE ACTION..

Rob Hubbard, a man who made the 64 sound like a Casio VL-Tone, has fans in all walks of life. Apparently a Welsh member of the public wrote to Mastertronic to see if there was any way of acquiring the score to *Action Biker*. It seems the local morris dancing team is short of suitable music and that Rob Hubbard's *Action Biker* is just the ticket.
However, it's not for the adult morris dancing team, oh no the tune is **far** too whimsical for grown ups to prance about to. They want to use it for the Dinkies, their under six team who all love *Action Biker* apparently. Aah! Quaint, is it not?



A VERY LOW BLOW--

Obviously feeling a little bit left out with all the recent excitement at British Telecom, what with all the takeovers, the elligibly young and attractive Colin Fuidge from Firebird has been out and about recently, causing havoc among magazine editorial staff by viciously attacking certain vital parts of their male anatomy. Colin, like the 'interestin' Steve Davis, obviously likes to line all his balls up before taking a pot shot at them and **The Shadow**, hidden in the darker recesses of a very fashionable software party recently, watched awestruck as the erstwhile ex-Woolworth's telly salesman from Firebird swiped most of ex-AMTIX! Editor Jeremy Spencer's nether-regions with a well-aimed blow below the belt. It isn't clear why the usually very placid Mr Fuidge should behave in this most unbecoming manner, but **The Shadow** suspects it has something to do with a Mail Order problem.

FISHY BUT TRUE!

The Shadow's monthly award for incompetence, the Rubber Fish of Stupidity, is in fact a real fish. His name is **Dim Dim** and he recently enjoyed a fun afternoon in Shrewsbury, courtesy of ZZAP! reviewers Gary Liddon and Gary Penn and fortunately Newsfield Ace Cub reporter, Andrew Wright, was on hand to catch the cretinous aquanaut in a celluloid net . . .



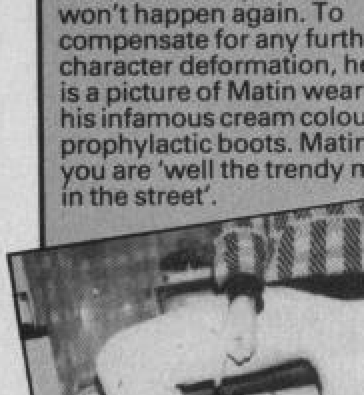
Dim Dim decided to phone up a friend from a nearby callbox, but realised he couldn't dial since he hasn't any hands. To cap it all, he forgot who he was going to call in the first place! Slightly annoyed, our foolish rubber friend decided to phone the operator instead, to claim back his money. Don't ask **how** he put the money in, because he doesn't know. He's stupid.

Firebird's Mr Fuidge trying to sell Dim Dim a colour television in a local branch of Woolies. He doesn't know why. He's stupid.

While living it up in the Big Apple recently, Herbie 'Hyperbole' Wright lost something of more personal value than even Mr Spencer's manhood. Firebird's Top Man had every single item of clothing stolen from his hotel room during his absence. A veritable travesty! **The Shadow** wonders who would stoop so low as to remove this man's clothing and requests that the dastard returns them immediately, if not sooner. Maybe the thief is an entrepeneur seeking cheap decoration for his new, New York based Indian restaurant? There are problems enough in this industry and relentless clothes thieves don't help. 'Run along little boys'



The Shadow appologises to Activision's Mr Gysh for misspelling his Christian name last month. It should have read M-A-T-I-N instead of M-A-R-T-I-N. Sorry Matin, it won't happen again. To compensate for any further character deformation, here is a picture of Matin wearing his infamous cream coloured prophylactic boots. Matin, you are 'well the trendy man in the street'.



RECAPTURING HIS MISSPENT YOUTH...

Talking of blonde-haired mega-programmers, Tony Crowther is once more on the move. After a mere year with Wizard Developments he's back off to Alligata, software company of his mis-spent youth. The bleached Boy Wander has also co-founded a new company of his own with Ben Daglish, a classically trained musician and program dabbler to boot. Their firm is called WEMUSIC (**WE M**ake **U**se of **S**ound **I**n **C**omputers) and their function is to provide soundtracks for up-and-coming games. So far the duo have managed to piece together a most impressive demo disk which out-Hubbards many of the better Commodore musicians. Hopefully these two companies will manage to hold onto the industry's equivalent of Monro for a bit longer than the others . . .

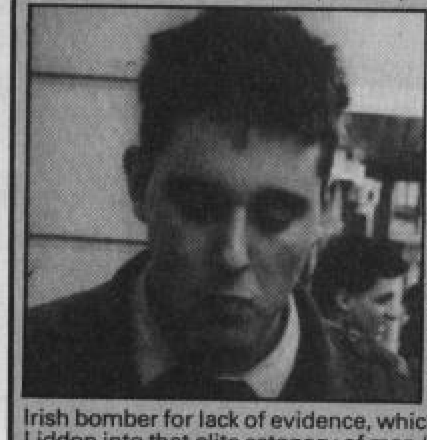




Here Andrew has captured Dim Dim swimming in a cup of British Rail tea whilst reciting the first chapter of A'la Recerche du Temps Perdu. He doesn't know why. He's stupid.

DEPORTATION SHOCK SCANDAL FOR LIDDON.

It takes a lot of hard and dedicated work to be Gary Liddon, reviewer of this parish. Care and polish goes into the finished product,reflected by the quality of supreme daftness the model exhibits. Invited recently on an all-expenses-paid trip to visit



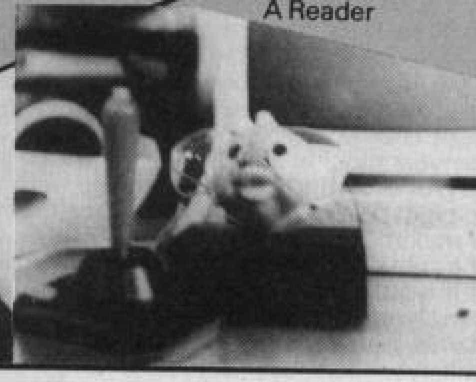
ROM utility producers Robtek at their Rotterdam HQ, the virgin air traveller dashed to Heathrow to catch the early morning flight sans passport ('I've never had one'), sans short term Visa ('I'm with the Midland') and without Driving Licence for last ditch stand identification ('forgot it, didn't I'). As a result, the Dutch Immigration officers turned Mr Liddon back at Rotterdam airport on the grounds that he could constitute an international threat. Strange then, that at the same time they were hellbent on releasing a known Irish bomber for lack of evidence, which puts Gary Liddon into that elite category of men (the club was inaugurated by Pontius Pilate), innocents who are exchanged for a criminal.

FLOODS OF TEARS FOR LIDDON - - AHHH!



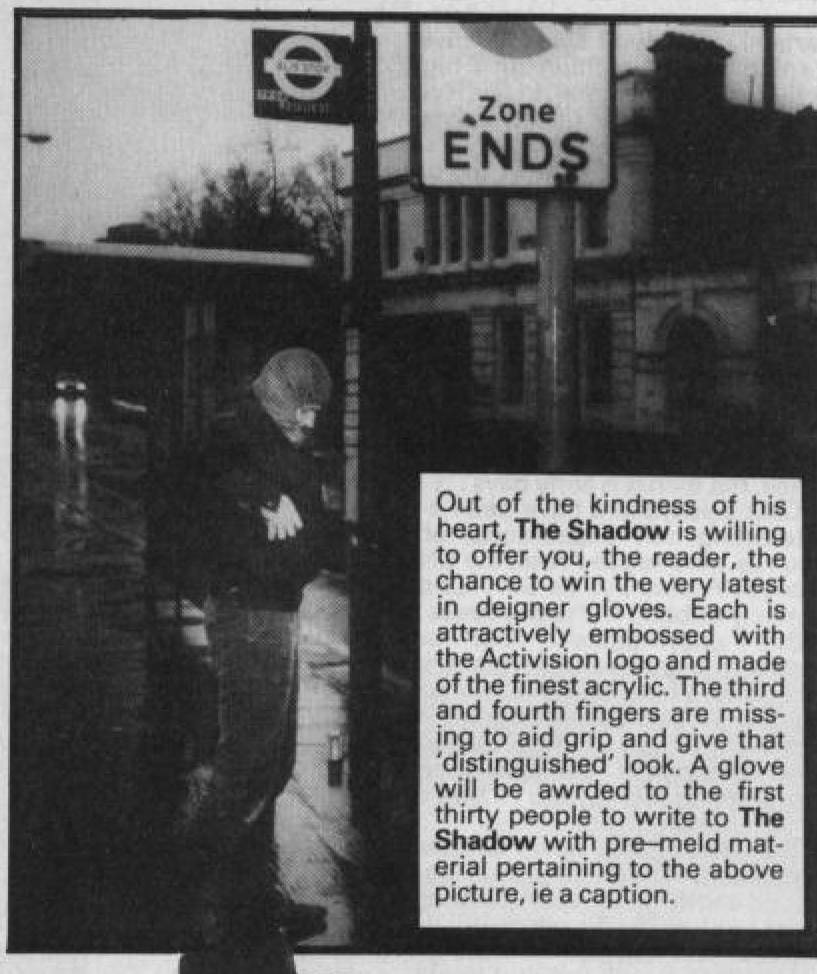
A READER RIGHTS...

Dear Shadow,
I wonder if any readers have noticed the remarkable resemblance between Electric Dreams supremo Rod Cousens and Dim Dim, The Rubber Fish of Stupidity. Are they by any chance related?
Yours sincerely
A Reader





The Shadow was recently browsing through the last issue of ZZAP! and came across an advert for Gremlin Graphics' *Bounder*. On close examination it became clear that the quote attributed to that most wonderous of monochromatic publications, Computer Gamer, is not entirely their own work. In fact, a big slice of it is taken from rival publication Your Commodore. **The Shadow** suspects that it could be a result of Argus only having one office for both magazines . . .



Out of the kindness of his heart, **The Shadow** is willing to offer you, the reader, the chance to win the very latest in deigner gloves. Each is attractively embossed with the Activision logo and made of the finest acrylic. The third and fourth fingers are missing to aid grip and give that 'distinguished' look. A glove will be awrded to the first thirty people to write to **The Shadow** with pre–meld material pertaining to the above picture, ie a caption.



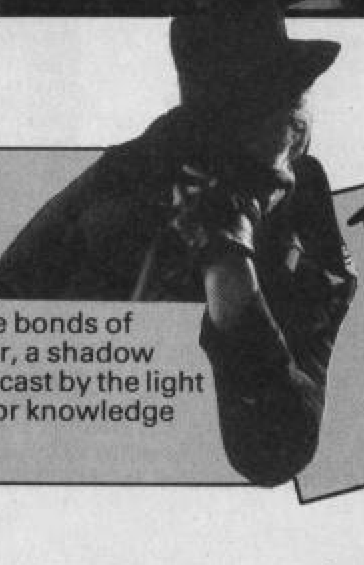
TASKSET TRIBUTE...

The past month or so has seen the sad departure of Northern software house, Taskset, who wrote several original and innovative games and earned the respect of many a programmer, amongst them Jeff Minter, in the process. Some of their more notable programs are *Super Pipeline I and II, Jammin', CAD CAM Warrior* and more recently *Rupert and the Ice Palace* and *The Flintstones* for Quicksilva. When the news reached the ears of those present at the Newsfield party, there was not a dry eye in the house. Pictured above is the angst ridden mask of Art supremo Oliver Frey, intently clutching his Taskset Memorial Mug. **The Shadow** salutes you, Mr Frey, for such a touching tribute.

OLIVER FREY TAKES HIS TEA VERY SERIOUSLY!

THE TRUTH SEEKERS GATHER...

Well that's it for this month truth seekers as the bonds of melding that form **The Shadow** fail. Remember, a shadow cannot exist without light and **THE SHADOW** is cast by the light of truth. Any information to further the quest for knowledge should be sent to ,,,



THE SHADOW
c/o ZZAP! 64
P.O. BOX 10
LUDLOW
SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

THE COMPUNET PAGE

YOU'LL ALWAYS FIND ME IN THE KITCHEN ON PARTY LINE . . .

Last month **Gary Liddon** gave a brief outline of **Party Line** and its shortcomings. Since then however, most of the 'flaws' have been rectified and there have been some significant changes, which make Party Line far more interesting and enjoyable to use. The new system is really smart and features 'rooms' to chat in instead of a single area. You start in the 'lobby' and are told who else is on Party Line and which room they are in if they're not in the 'lobby'. Other rooms can be entered by simply typing ***ENTER** followed by the room name of your choice, which means you can hold a conversation in the 'sauna', the 'kitchen' say, or even the 'toilet' should you wish! Up to eight people can co-habit a 'location' and a maximum of thirty people can 'party' at the same time.

If you're not sure where a person is, simply typing ***WHERE** followed by their name reveals their whereabouts. Better still, you can 'call' someone to let them know you wish to converse! Party Line has certainly improved since its advent and is turning into something of a highly interactive 'mini-adventure'. In fact it could quite easily do so, as the facility exists to throw dice of any number of sides — something which might be of interest to role playing persons. The use of 'rooms' gives Party Line a most unusual flavour and atmosphere, something previously lacking, and combined with the ability to adopt a temporary alias, it proves great fun to use — especially if you let your imagination run riot! Elsewhere on this page is the transcript of a conversation that took place on the new Party Line between Mr Liddon and **John Krzesinski**, Compunet's Technical Support. Unfortunately it crashed after a short while, but then it is early days . . .

Chat aside, there have been a couple of interesting new appearances on the net, such as the **Purple Press**, the CNET equivalent of *Private Eye* as Gary Liddon affectionately dubbed it. **Purple Press** features a rather unsympathetic but humourous 'problem page', a classifieds section, a letters page, a host of silly 'news' and a contributors section where budding hacks can display their talent. Such as **Jeff Minter**, who uploaded a neat little science fiction story. Worth a look if you're after alternative entertainment.

So what else is new? **Graham Marsh**, better known as the **Mighty Bogg**, has composed and arranged two new tunes — **Shoe** and **Lettuce**. The former is a bit dull and not a patch on the latter which is much more inspiring. In fact it has sufficiently inspired Gary Liddon and myself to compose some suitable lyrics. More of those next month though. Both pieces can be found at the Mighty Bogg's Music Hall — if you're willing to persevere: Mr Marsh's section has unfortunately become polluted with various pieces of flotsam and jetsam in the form of useless or irrelevant uploads.

The **Zapclub** is going well, at least it seems that way, and the dung of the net, Nozin' Aroun', has attracted more than its fair share of 'flies'. The Dude, a man who gets aroused by his own reflection and apologises to himself for being unfaithful, has dominated the section in an introverted kind of way and built up a following of sorts. There's even an Anti-Dude Society who have declared all out 'war' on the cool cat from where it's at. But then that's to be expected if you insist on signing off 'Here's looking at me, kid'?

Finally, CNET art supremo **Bob Stevenson** has been at it again and come up with some quite stunning artwork, a majority of which is featured overleaf with critical appraisal from ZZAP!s resident eccentric and Zen philosopher, **Brigitte Van Reuben**. She also casts a perceptive eye over the 'avant garde' works of **Hugh Riley** (AEW1), a man whose style is not in the least bit derivative and whose pictures are the most original and innovative of all those seen in the Hall of Fame.

```
Compunet Party Line
Please wait...

Users in Party Line:

JOHNK     (JDK1)      LOBBY

johnk:
Hello ZZap

ZZAP! 64:
good day, imperious leader of Cnet

johnk:
You're early tonight!

ZZAP! 64:
we are indeed, not much to do in
the way  of work so we decided
to log on to the holy orifice
q
    Unkown command

johnk:
Hehehehe!! What was the problem
earlier???

Rooms in Party Line:

LOBBY


ZZAP! 64:
What problem??

Commands are:

*ALIAS name   Change name
*BYE          Leave Party Line
*CALL         Call from other room
*DICE n       Throw 'n'-faced die
*ENTER room   Enter another room

*MESSAGE      Leave a message
text...
*READ         Read the messages
*ROOMS        List the rooms
*WHERE name   Find where 'name' is
*WHO          Who is in Party Line
*WHO room     Who is in 'room'

johnk:
You left a message saying 'HELP!'??

ZZAP! 64:
xOh, that was Mr Penn having a
preliminary jaunt on the new system
He will be writing this months
CNET piece

ZZAP! 64:
It's all very jolly really

johnk:
Oh. I see. How did he get on??

ZZAP! 64:
Well enouugh to explain it to me.

johnk:
hehehehe!! What do you think of it
then??

ZZAP! 64:
Fancy a quick brew in the Kitchen?

johnk:
OK

johnk has left the room

    You are the only one here

johnk from KITCHEN calls you


You are now in KITCHEN

ZZAP! 64:
This is nYat.

johnk:
pardon??

ZZAP! 64:
Always in the kitchen on
partyline
```

```
ZZAP! 64:
This is neat

Johnk:
Good. glad you think so!!

ZZAP! 64:
One lump or two?

ZZAP! 64:
Milk?

Johnk:
2 please!!
Yep

ZZAP! 64:
Darjeeling, lemon, iced?

Johnk:
I'll setle for a cup of D!

ZZAP! 64:
Since when has the new PLine been
on system?

Johnk:
Since the day before yesterday

ZZAP! 64:
How many people can it handle,
if that's not too personal.

Johnk:
30 people, in a maximum  of 8 rooms
with a maximum of 8 people per room

ZZAP! 64:
How has Chat on Line been faring
since the advent of this system.

Johnk:
It has become more of a bulletin
board rather than a means of chat,
but it does still get used!
w
%FRSUOO/////////////////////////////
////////////////////////////////////
////////////////////////////////////
////////////////////////////////////
// Undefined ENTRY in FORERR
? Job aborted
?


?Illegal memory reference at user P
C 400067

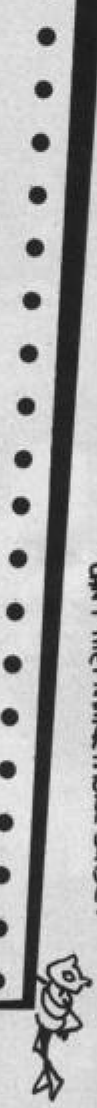

?
?Illegal memory reference at user P
C 400067


%FRSUOO//// Undefined ENTRY in FORE
RR
Enter new file specs. End with an $
(ALT)
*

%FRSCOR  Runtime memory management
error (PM4)
Name(Loc) <<---Caller(Loc)<#Args>[A
rg Types]
STOP.(2737) <<--- MAIN.+10(253)<#0>
[]

? Job aborted

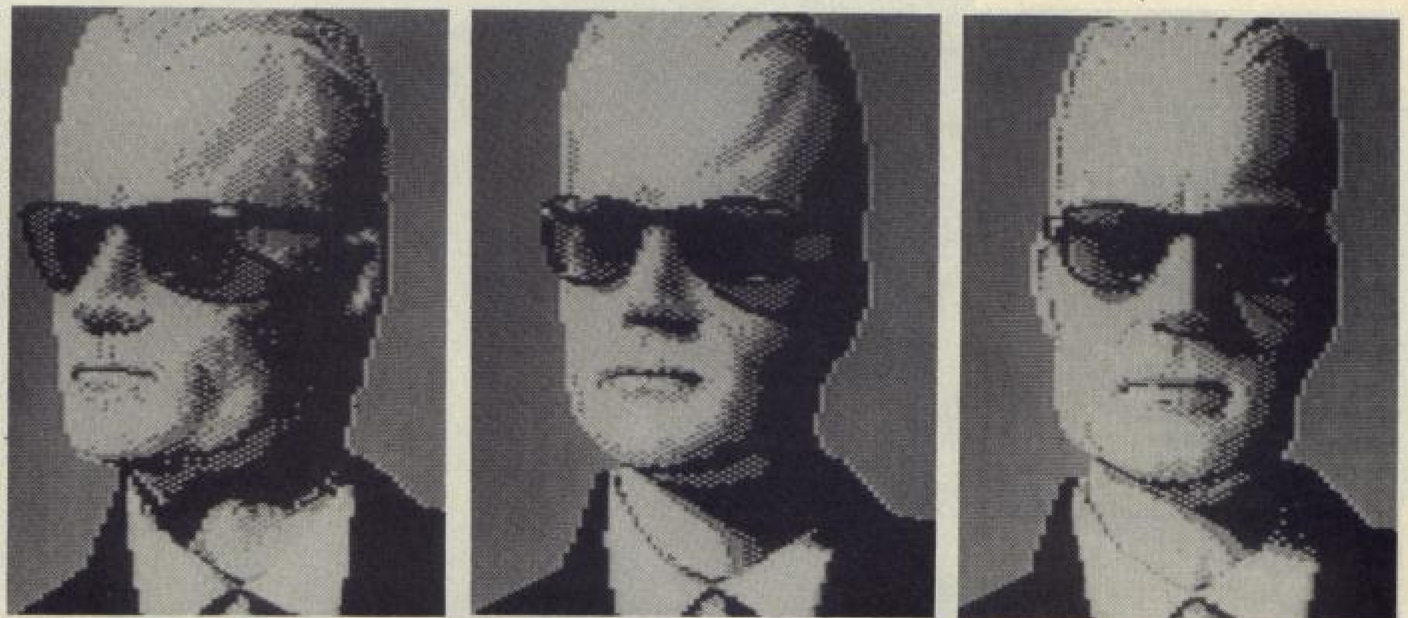
##bcs on;dec off;int 0;ime on;ctd o
ff
*COMPUNET
```



THE ART GALLERY

THE HEADROOM ANIMATIONS (Bob Stevenson)

Since first unveiling his Max Headroom canvas, Stevenson has returned to his obsession with a vengeance, providing us with an intense triptych, showing Max from three slightly varying angles. The meld between portraiture and animation is beautifully expressed in the frozen expression of the figure, and the exploration of light and shade across the planes of the face from frame to frame — note especially the subtle gradations behind the darkened spectacles, heightening the essential mystery of the man and emphasising the sinister aspect.



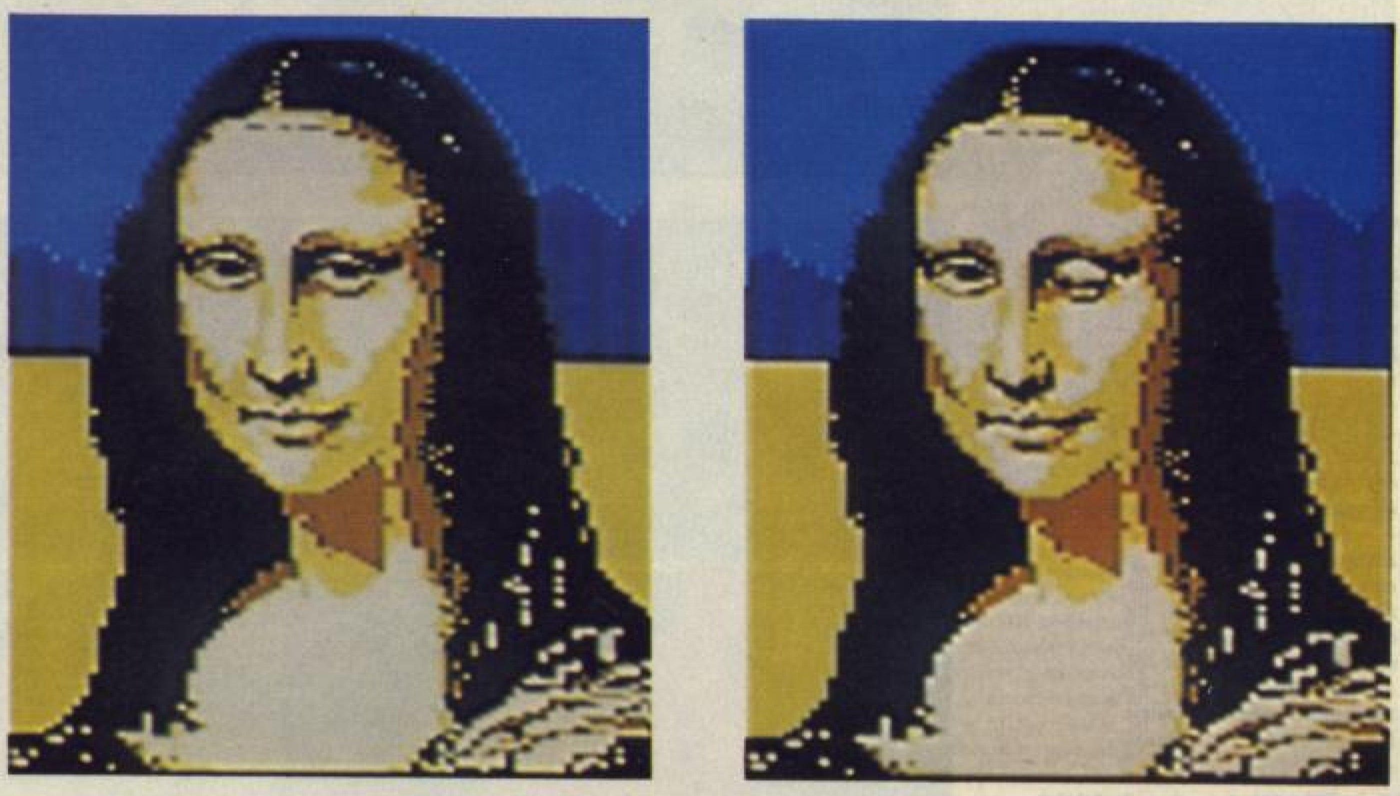


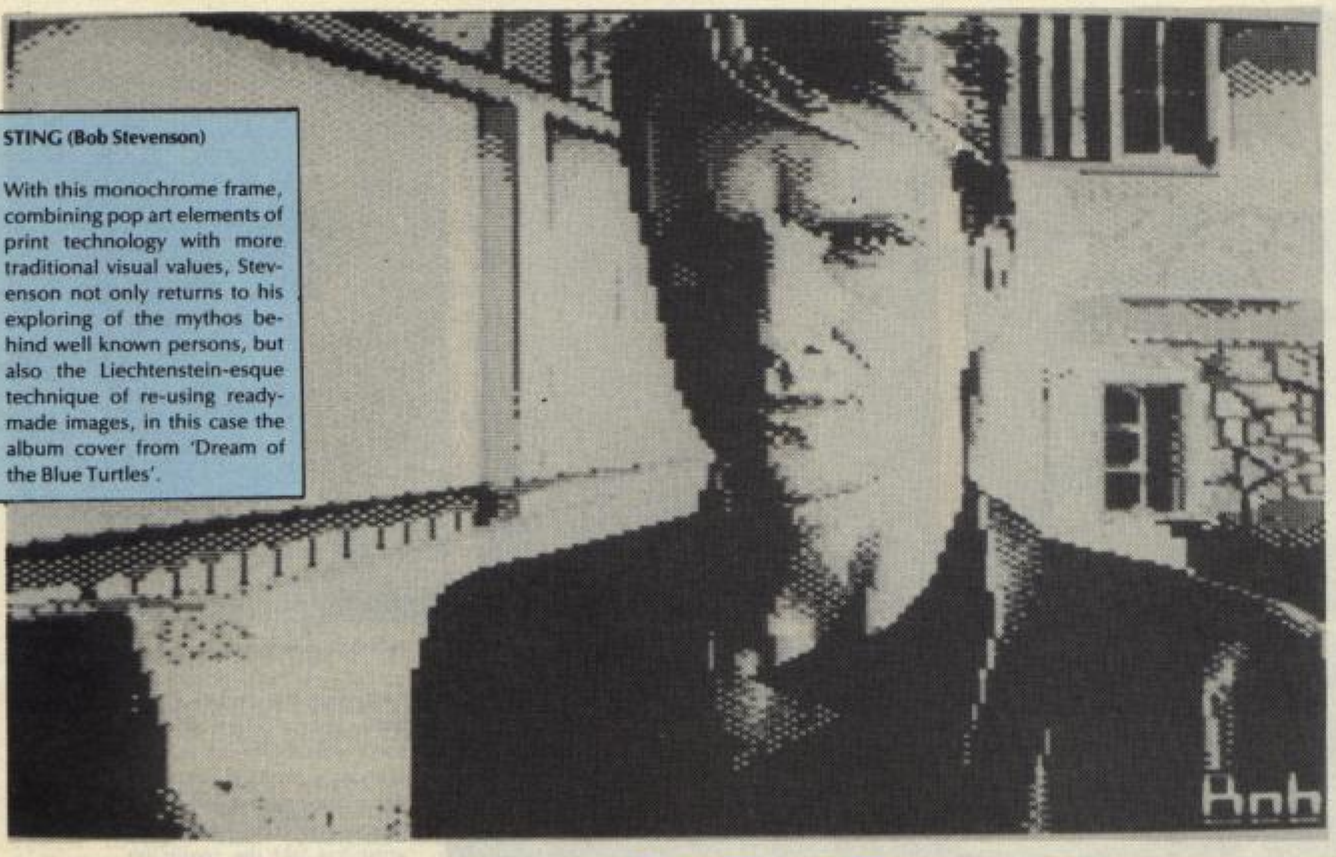
JUNO (Bob Stevenson)

Eschewing the heroes of his better known oeuvre, Stevenson's most recent colour work portrays a mythical character. Part of the pre-prandial school of meta-regurgitationism, the artist has laid the colour on thickly, richly mixing ochres, terra verte and chrome yellows with impasto whites to give an almost sculptured look to this quasi-chinoise imp. The oriental influence dates back to the Paris School of the early twentieth century and even further back to the effete aesthetes of the Fin de Siècle period, but Stevenson's vigorous brush work belies any camp effect.

OUR LISA (Hugh Riley)

The famous Mona Lisa painting by Leonardo da Vinci has been the inspiration for many an artist. Riley has captured the disturbing intensity of Ms Lisa's stare, but avoided what made the original disconcerting — the change of landscape height behind the head — in exchange for adding something the computer can do that the painting cannot — now and again Ms Lisa winks. This isn't a cheap joke, but an essentially distancing ingredient, severing the shackles of post-modernism in an attempt to understand the relationship between subject and viewer.





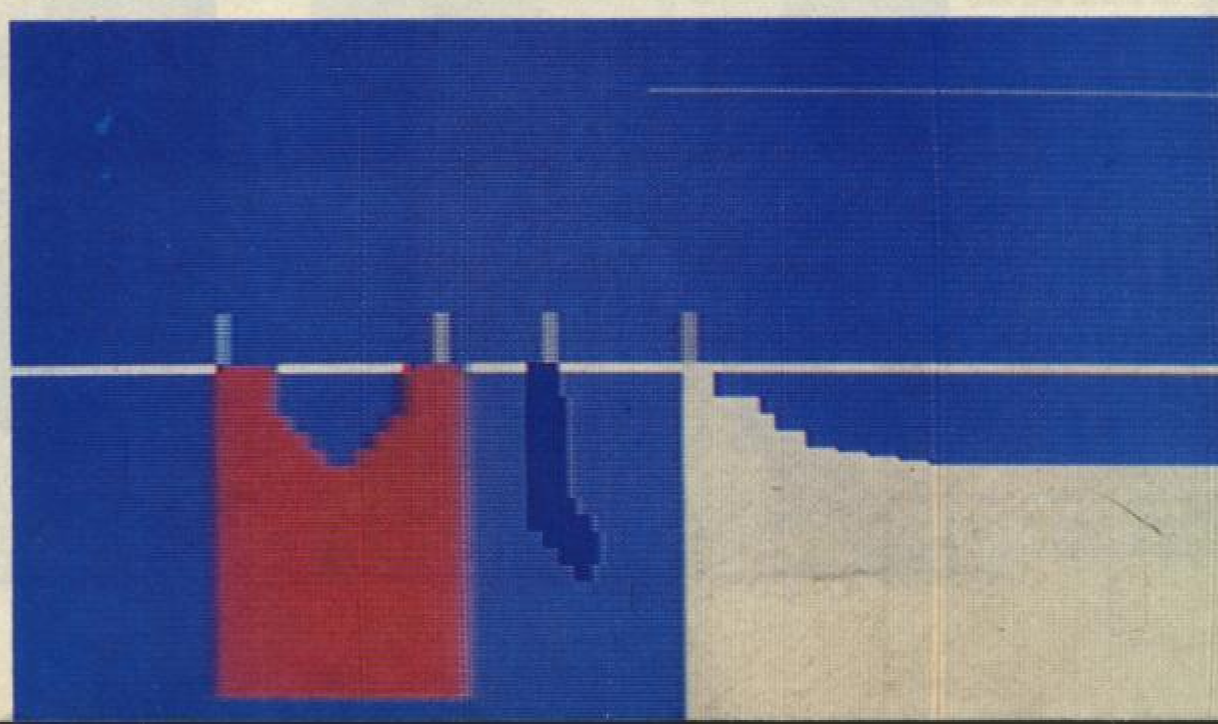
STING (Bob Stevenson)

With this monochrome frame, combining pop art elements of print technology with more traditional visual values, Stevenson not only returns to his exploring of the mythos behind well known persons, but also the Liechtenstein-esque technique of re-using ready-made images, in this case the album cover from 'Dream of the Blue Turtles'.



ANY OTHER NAME (Hugh Riley)

Eat your heart out Patrick Caulfield! Riley's rose could be called a pretty flower painting and nothing more, but in playing with the two dimensional parameters of the canvas, the artist is making some complex statements about the way in which we see three dimensional objects. The hegemony of mathematical perspective is overturned, freeing us forever from the tyrany of perceptual conventionalism. This may be a rose, but by any other name it is a major event in computer art.



CONCORDE (Hugh Riley)

Riley's other art d'humour image is of a far more subtle aspect than 40 Years. Here, high technology is mixed with the more earthly concerns of wash day. Emphasis is a vital ingredient in any artist's repertoire, and Riley has made us see the miracle of Concorde as a streak in the sky — virtually an irrelevance alongside the importance of clean linen. However, the jokiness of the picture belies the compositional artistry of this canvas, with its bold, flat colour fields striding across the blue void in vertical opposition to Concorde's horizontal speed.





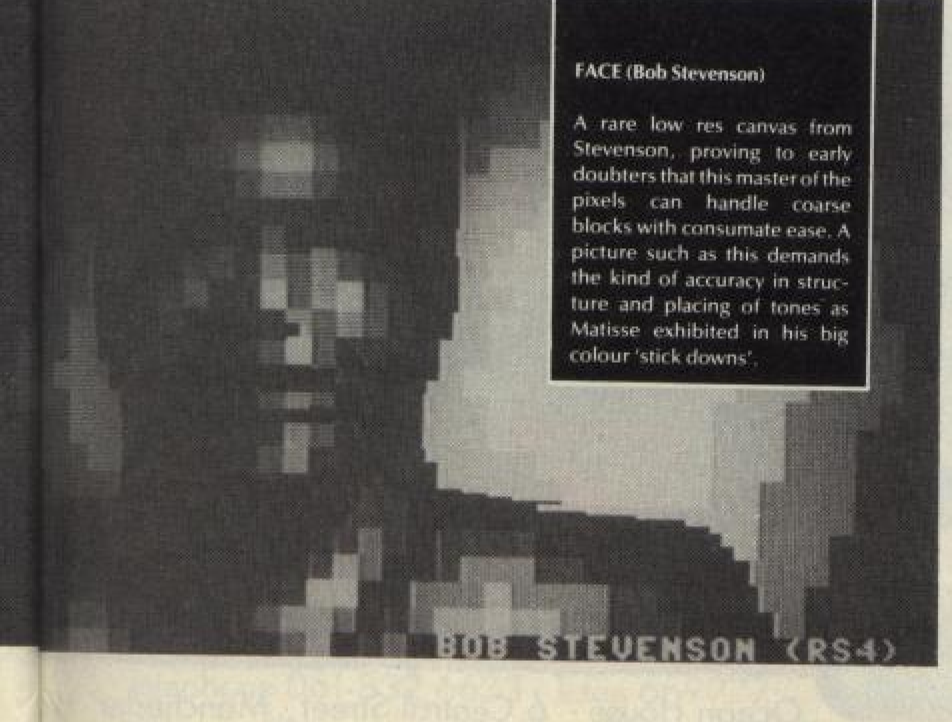
THE TERMINATOR (Stu Jackson)

More Judge Dreadful, this time from the brush of Jackson, another in the mainstream of image re-users like Stevenson, but Jackson's concerns lie more in the direction of biceptual butchism. The flat expression of Schwartzenegger has been crudely exaggerated to present a picture of barely suppressed malevolence, culminating in the foreground in the powerfully directed (phallic?) firearm. Clever use of the pink laser beams, balances the compositional aspects of the work and additionally symbolises the radiating force of antipathy.



40 YEARS TECHNOLOGY (Hugh Riley)

Moving from the the meticulous to the sublime, this work owes more to the cartoonist than the artist, where two disparate ideas not usually associated with each other, are brought together in one image. There is a time-honoured tradition of 'art' cartoons in Punch magazine, into which category this falls. The first visual joke is the artist sizing his subject except he is using a light pen and not a brush or pencil. The second is the subject on which he is working; proving that a joke in strong taste can in itself be art.



FACE (Bob Stevenson)

A rare low res canvas from Stevenson, proving to early doubters that this master of the pixels can handle coarse blocks with consumate ease. A picture such as this demands the kind of accuracy in structure and placing of tones as Matisse exhibited in his big colour 'stick downs'.



CALL ME ACE (Richard Hare — aka MACH81)

Again we are presented with a comic book hero in full flight of exuberant fancy, female sidekick in full chauvinist tow. The brash drawing and colouring of this work echoes its commercial source, but fails to provide any real understanding of the nature of the hero or its origination. It remains firmly uncommunicative, demanding of the viewer an appreciation of its own inbuilt subtelties.


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THE COLLECTION

The PSS WARGAMERS SERIES has been created to combine elements of a strategy game like chess with the added excitement of a graphic arcade game. They are for the player who wants a serious but stimulating game requiring both manual dexterity and mental agility. The strategic level of the games is played on a map system, whilst the tactical can be played in an optional arcade style with you actually firing guns and missiles.

THEATRE EUROPE – STRATEGY GAME OF THE YEAR 1985 – CRASH/ZZAP/AMTIX.

Theatre Europe portrays the next war in Europe. Command either NATO or the WARSAW PACT forces and control air/ground/nuclear and chemical units. Optional arcade sequences put you actually in the hot seat. 3 Level game where Level 1 is for beginners (the computer opponent will not use the Nuclear option). Level 2 is a "rational" game following the accepted strategies of NATO and the WARSAW PACT. In level 3 the computer plays a highly unpredictable game where anything can happen.

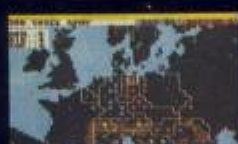
"THE ATMOSPHERE GENERATED BY THIS EXCELLENT GAME IS INCREDIBLE – VIRTUALLY UNRIVALLED BY ANYTHING ELSE AVAILABLE" ZZAP 64 JUNE '85 – GOLD MEDAL AWARD.

"HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE ALL OTHER WARGAMES – A POWERFUL LESSON" CCI JULY '85.

WARGAMERS SERIES







"IT MAKES YOU THINK MORE THAN MOST GAMES" – AA RAVE – AMSTRAD ACTION FEB '86.

A C At (S avail soon) £9.95

BATTLE OF BRITAIN

A 3 level game with you in control of fighter command during the summer of 1940. Optional arcade sequences include flying a Spitfire in aerial combat and firing an anti aircraft gun in ground to air fighting.



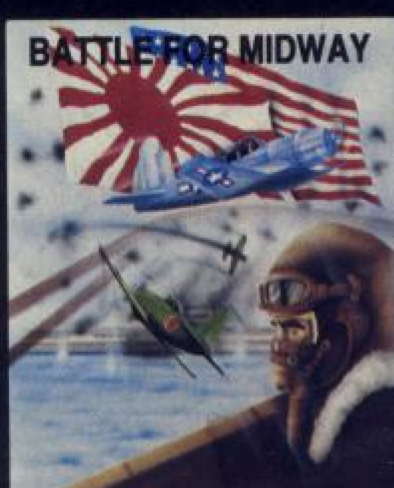
"ONE OF THE MOST PLAYABLE WARGAMES EVER" COMPUTER GAMER DEC '85
GO AND BUY IT!" – AMTIX DEC '85
"SUPERB!" – ZZAP 64 XMAS '85

A C (S avail soon) £9.95



BATTLE FOR MIDWAY

You are in command of the US Pacific fleets 6 months after the attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbour. It is a 3 level game depicting 3 different Japanese strategies.



"COMMENDED – STRATEGY GAME OF THE YEAR 1984 – C & VG
"ONE OF THE MOST AMBITIOUS WARGAMES EVER RELEASED" ZZAP 64 DEC '85

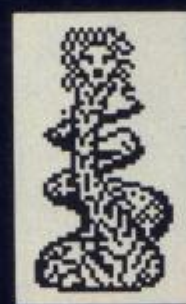
A C S M £9.95



MIDAS







"GAME CONCEPT OF THE YEAR 1985" CRASH/ZZAP 64/AMTIX "GAME OF THE MONTH" – C & VG JAN '86
"CRASH SMASH" – JAN '86

S A (C avail soon) £9.95

MIDAS – The Midas series of role playing real time graphic adventures are totally expandable. Not only do you have stunning 3D fully animated graphics, real time interactive conflict and conversation sequences, but you can transfer your player character into different scenarios from the Midas range. A series of expansion modules are also planned to add new opponents, larger scenarios and different quests to increase indefinitely the playing life of each game written with MIDAS.

SWORDS & SORCERY – represents the first example of the Midas range. As with all role playing adventures, the aim of the game is to develop your character – you might want to become an expert swordsman, or perhaps a cunning thief – all things are possible with Swords & Sorcery. There are also quests within quests for those who want to follow them – some are given, others must be found – some are lost causes – the choice is yours!

Although possibly the most complex program yet attempted on a home micro, the controls are simplicity itself. Just six keys will control your progress around the dungeon and operate the menu system for all your other commands.

"SWORDS & SORCERY REPRESENTS THE MOST SOPHISTICATED D + D TYPE GAME YET SEEN ON A HOME MICRO" COMPUTER GAMER – GAME OF THE MONTH – DEC '85

Strategic WARGAMES SERIES

THE STRATEGIC WARGAMES SERIES has been designed with the wargame "purist" in mind. The games are played on a map system, are "phased" and use symbolic representation of the units. Playability is the key note in the series with 5 levels of difficulty suitable for beginner and expert alike.

FALKLANDS '82

"A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF HOW WARGAMES SHOULD BE PRESENTED" CBM USER JAN '86
"FALKLANDS '82 WILL CHALLENGE AVID WARGAMERS FOR MONTHS" COMPUTER GAMER JAN '86 AS

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IWO JIMA – NEW RELEASE

In the closing stages of WWII, the US Marines fought their costliest and toughest battle of the entire war – the capturing of the island of IWO JIMA. You command those forces whilst the computer controls the Japanese.

C (S avail soon) £7.95

A	=	AMSTRAD
S	=	SPECTRUM
C	=	CBM 64
At	=	ATARI
M	=	MSX









MACADAM BUMPER

Pinball Wizards will love this game. Playing the table provided will provide hours of fun, but with Macadam Bumper you can design your own layout – from positioning flippers and bumpers right down to adjusting the Tilt sensitivity. The possibilities are endless!

"THIS IS THE PINBALL GAME IN EXCELSIS!" RAVE OF THE MONTH – YOUR SPECTRUM NOV '85.
"AN EXCELLENT PACKAGE" – 87% – CRASH SEPT '85

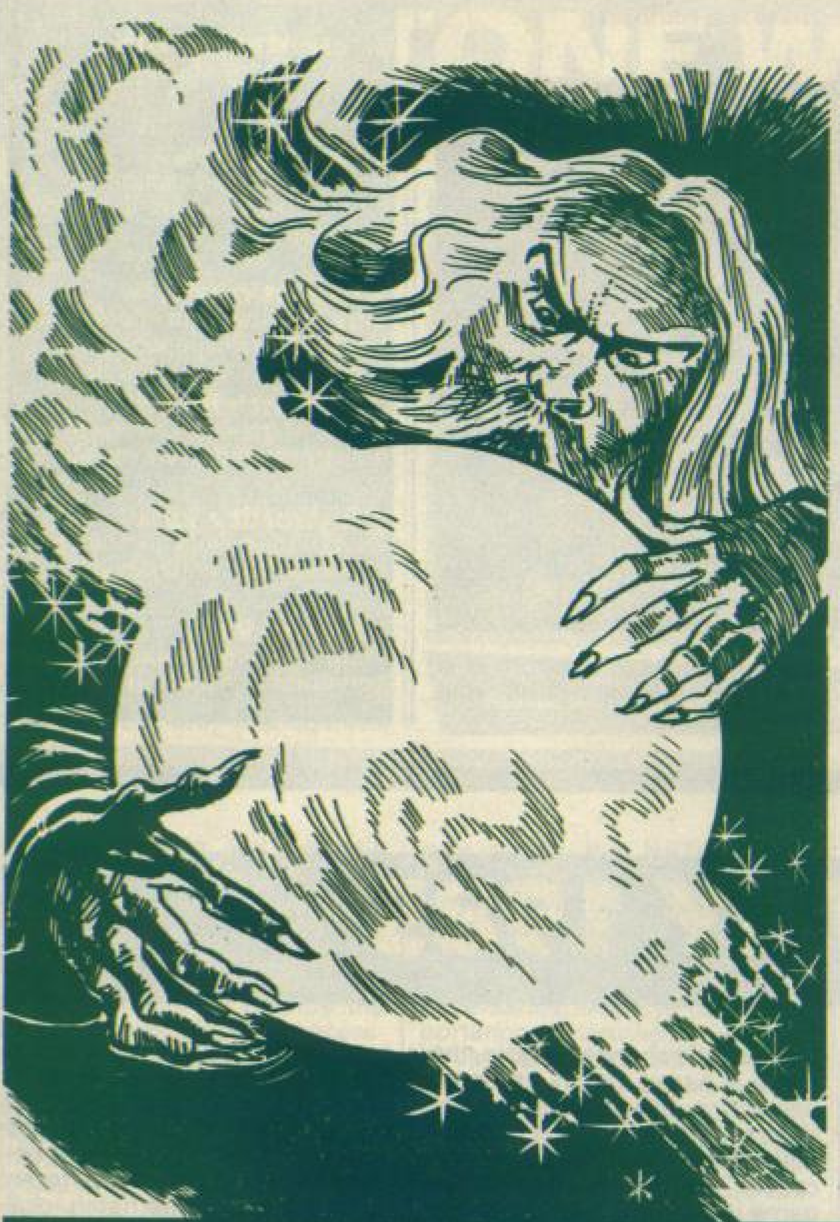
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ISN'T THIS WHERE..?

The latest issue of *The Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society* has recently appeared on my desk. For those of you who are otherwise unaware of its existence, this classic quarterly is published by the American company, Game Designers' Workshop to complement their cult role playing game, *Traveller*. GDW are now marketing referee's aids in the form of disk based programs for the Apple range of micros. Various programs for generating anything from random Subsectors (mapped areas of space several parsecs across) and Wordgen files (allowing names to be created in the complex languages used by the alien races in the game or even for the creation of new language source files) to a Bestiary program where the physical parameters of a world can be fed in and the program generates possible non-sentient life form characteristics are included.

Referees of this and other games have always been able to carry out such work before, of course. In that sense the products are nothing new — but they are important for another reason. Apart from the speed at which these utilities will carry out the tasks, they bring the association of RPGs and home computing another step closer. At one end, we have companies like SSI and PSS developing computer games with more and more role playing characteristics (the American market is far ahead of the UK in this respect) and on the other, we have first steps from leading specialist games companies (and smaller independents) to encourage the greater use of computers with their games.

What will happen when the two sides meet?

Again this month, I'll be taking a further look at the package of disk-based SSI games which US Gold is planning to release shortly in Britain. None of these is actually on sale yet, so no letters please about non-availability — I'll let you know as soon as they are out. Consequently the price hasn't been fixed either.

QUESTRON

US Gold/SSI, disk only, keys and/or joystick

SIZZLER

Unlike its predecessor *Phantasie*, this game is a single player RPG. Set in the world of Questron, your mission is to recover the Book of Evil Magic which has been stolen by an evil Wizard called Mantor in an attempt to gain power over the land. As a direct result of the book falling into his possession, the land is now scourged by evil creatures from the depths of hell, brought into creation by Mantor. The King's armies too, have been decimated by the hordes of demons and other creatures under Mantor's command.

You play a lowly serf who has received the dubious honour of being selected for the mission by the King himself. The only hope lies in the legend that a poor peasant may save the land in its direst hour. Should the myth turn out to be false then the land has a dubious future ahead of it.

Packaging is up to SSI's usual high standards, with brief notes, a well printed instruction book complete with potted history of

The Wild country — part of the fascinating world of Questron.





the events leading up to the present circumstances provided in the well illustrated box. The program itself begins with a menu allowing you to preview different sections of the game, ask for more instructions or load a saved game.

Unlike, *Phantasie*, where characters are created at the start of the game replete with necessary characteristics, the computer seems to have only one standard character which the player is intended to use and there is no way to modify this. The character is displayed on screen as a single colour User Defined Graphic inside the action window, while a menu appears down the left hand side of the screen. Messages appear at the base of the screen. Commands are of the single letter type but a good selection of these is available. A joystick may be used in conjunction with, or instead of the keyboard so interaction with the game is very fast indeed.

You know little about the world of Questron, never having travelled far before, so no map or detailed information about the world is provided. You wander blindly therefore, from settlement to settlement in the hope of earning sufficient to stay

fit and purchase equipment whilst simultaneously trying to acquire information about what's going on around you. The countryside is displayed with different terrain types and scrolls as your character travels across it. Some terrain remains impassable without the proper equipment (mountains for instance). Inevitably, wandering monsters are encountered during your travels across the land. Sometimes a message warns you of their approach; others set upon you before any notice is given. When they are within sight, they are displayed on the map.

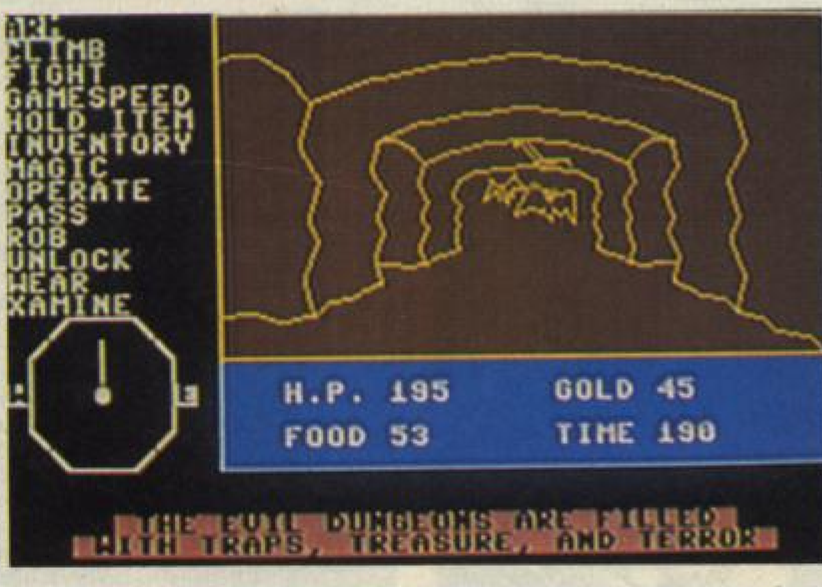
The monsters are well detailed in the book and they exist in such numbers and variety that graphics are undertandably simplified. Many of the descriptions are evidently tongue in cheek (one reference to the deadly Acid Peanut Butter springs to mind) but others would grace many a serious *D&D* campaign. Some creatures are terrain or locale bound whilst others are nomadic (like the Na-Ga Pilgrim, who often cuts himself in battle). Most of the creatures are deadly, some requiring special weaponry or fleetness of foot in order to escape from them.

Settlements can be visited and explored as can the Cathedrals of the Magician Priests. Much is to be learned when exploring these places and various activities are available for those who wish to take advantage of the social aspects of the game (such as gambling, for example). Despite the humour that runs throughout the game, *Questron* has a serious side to it as well. Socialising is one way of gaining information of vital importance to the game.

Eventually, your quest should lead to the unimaginatively named Land of Evil. From there, the monsters start becoming really vicious and most of the people you meet are literally after your blood. Should you make it to the dread dungeons at the heart of the quest, the game takes on a totally new aspect which should please most dungeoneers. The display now shows the view ahead in static fashion. If you imagine a simplified version of *The Eidolon* without the animation, that would be a good guide. Searching these dungeons requires the utmost wit and speedy response to every event. the traps and monsters prepared to take your insignificant life don't provide you with a moment's rest. You have been warned.

Having dreaded that *Questron* was just going to be a repeat of *Phantasie*, I was really pleased to see that the game designers had done something totally new and original with it. Like *Phantasie*, both sides of the disk are used but the game does not seem quite so unwieldy in this respect. Indeed the whole thing seemed more sophisticated (and I didn't find any of the bugs that plagued *Phantasie*, either). Without doubt, *Questron* is a must for the dedicated role player . . .

Vampire bats — just one of the many horrors to face you in the dungeons of the Land of Evil.



Presentation 90%
Up to SSI's usual high standards.

Graphics 90%
Some very good sections indeed (but you have to search to find them).

Instructions92%
Easy to follow with interesting History and Bestiary.

Authenticity 88%
Plenty of good RPG features are well translated to the medium.

Playability 93%
Keyboard/joystick combination makes for fast and easy play.

Overall 91%
Funny and well thought out computer role playing game.

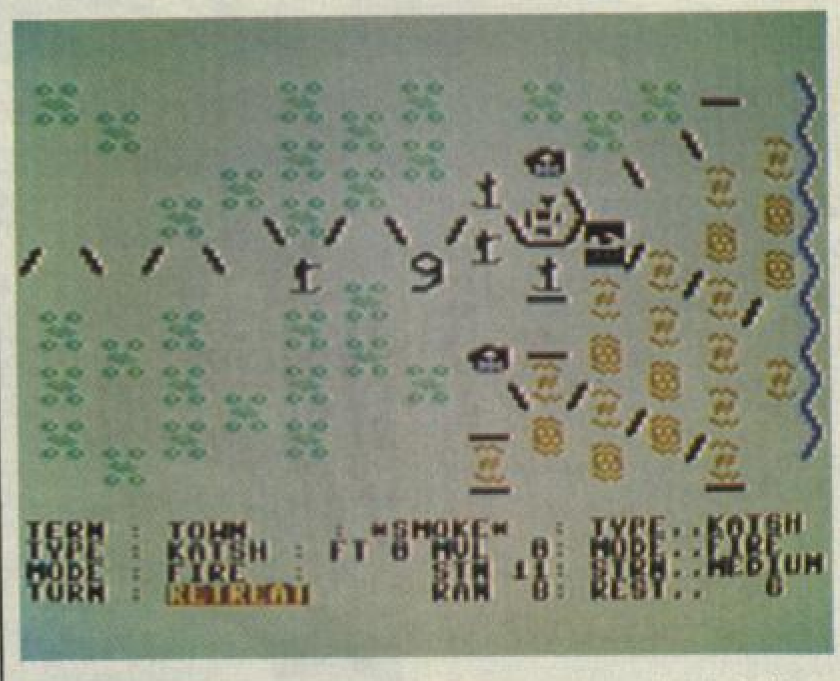
NORWAY 1985

US Gold/SSI, disk only

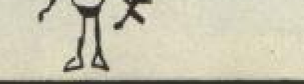
Second in SSI's series *When Superpowers Collide*, is a strategic simulation of conventional warfare in the Artic region (specifically Norway). In many ways it is identical to *Germany 1985* and the rules book presented in the game is only supplimentary to the *Germany* book. So make sure this isn't the first of the series you buy! Having said that, there are differences. First of all, the most obvious of these differences is that the game is presented on a white play screen rather than a black one (to represent the snow). however, beyond the superficialities, there are other, more subtle changes. Again, the game is based mainly on battalion action, but there are exceptions to this due to the relatively high presence of specialist forces in the region. Again, the game is basically a land warfare simulation but rules for tactical air strikes and local air superiority are also catered for in considerable detail. There are also some minor changes to how certain rules are implemented and the scale of the map is greater.



The scenario suggests that during the summer, conventional forces easily attack and occupy Norway while the rest of the war rages across Europe. However, with the onset of Winter, things begin to go wrong as Soviet equipment becomes bogged down and frozen up in the snow. The harsh local conditions that effectively changed the rules of modern warfare in Vietnam and Afghanistan now take their toll here. So whilst the Russians have superiority in terms of men and equipment, the NATO player has flexibility on his side.



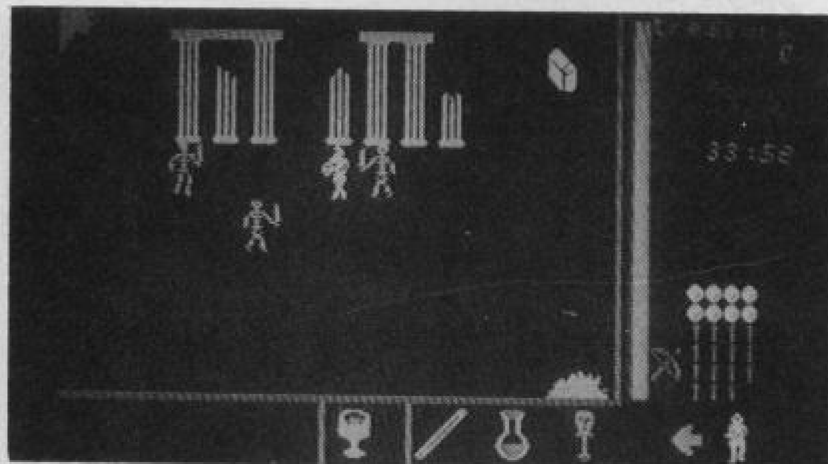
Whilst the scenario of *Germany* was believable considering the importance of the area in



GEMSTONE WARRIOR

US Gold/SSI, disk only, keys or joystick with keys

In the beginning, the gods created the world and all the creatures that lived above and below it. To man they gave the Gemstone and mankind used it for generations to create simple, harmless magic. the demons of the netherworld tried more than once to grasp the gemstone and use its power for their own purpose. Eventually, swarming across the face of the Earth, they killed the guardians of the stone and siezed it. Man fell into a state of despair. Magic began to fail and the race began to die out. The demons and their spawn spread but they could not harness the power of the stone. In frustration they attempted to destroy it but only managed to shatter it into five pieces, which they hid inside their underworld complex. You take the challenge of seeking out the fragments and returning them to what's left of the human race. You are the only hope.



Amidst the ruins, skeletons surround our hero.

There lies the plot for one of the most recent SSI role playing games. It differs from other SSI role playing games because it plays as a real time arcade adventure with strategic elements. The game accepts joystick control but as this will still require keyboard interaction to some extent, it's probably less confusing to use the keyboard throughout. the instructions aren't as thorough as in other SSI titles but they do provide a keyboard plan allowing you to get into the game very quickly. Most SSI rules books are bursting with useful information but in this book, most of the information dealt with game play on several other machines which gave the impression of a lack of imagination.

The character has a choice of weapons (fireball or crossbow), an inventory of useful objects (including a quiver of arrows) and a life force bar, all of which are visible on the screen. A real-time clock is also displayed along with treasure points to aid keeping track of progress during play. The rest of the screen consists of the play area itself, which scrolls as the character reaches its edge.

Apart from the theme tune used at the beginning, the game makes good use of sound effects to warn of different creatures approaching. However, the option to cancel these effects is just one of a series of redefinable features of the game. All the control keys may be altered to cater to personal taste and a high score table may be cleared at the player's discretion. All these features are only accessible at the start of the game.

The game normally begins with a short graphic sequence depicting your character's arrival at the temple (from where he is magically transported to the caves) but you have the option to commence play immediately. Once the cave system has been entered, you have to be constantly on your guard. Monsters come at you from all directions. Some are disease ridden and require a quick kill to avoid infection. Others multiply during combat and consequently make a deadly foe. As you fight with various weapons, the inventory totals alter to reflect ammunition used.

As the character explores the dungeons and caverns, he has the option to search dead foes or examine artifacts in search of magic items. More often than not, these are beneficial to his quest. Occasionally however, there may be traps or evil magic involved resulting in something very nasty happening!

I felt somewhat out of place, reviewing this game. It seemed as though one of the Garys or Julian should have reviewed it. With continued play, I began to realise why SSI were marketing this as a strategy game. It plays heavily on traditional role playing elements. However, by putting these into real time, they have taken away the often time consuming, logic puzzle aspect of the genre and the result seemed hollow when compared to their other efforts in this field. Consequently, I feel that SSI missed the mark; *Gemstone Warrior* fails as a true strategy game and doesn't have the straightfoward approach of a good graphic adventure. Technically, the game seems to work well and is wonderfully presented on the screen. Unfortunately, the praise stops there.

Presentation 84%
Excellent choice of screen options but disappointing rules book.

Graphics 85%
Good use of icons and inventory displays but lacking in some areas.

Instructions 81%
Very concise but lacking in imagination.

Authenticity N/A
I feel unable to rate this aspect of the game because of its approach.

Overall 80%
Fails to meet the high standard of other SSI games — it may never find the right market.

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an initial assault and the time scale involved, this scenario leaves a lot of questions unanswered which may detract from the credibility of the game. Ultimately, you will have to decide whether to employ the suspension of disbelief necessary to support the plot.

The game takes place in player time so you have as much time as you need to make command decisions. Ordering the forces involved is a simple procedure of placing the cursor over the unit to be ordered and selecting the appropriate command key from the menu (though this is not continually displayed). The effects of terrain and equipment malfunction are thoroughly dealt with and take into consideration the harsh environment. All these features combine to make play considerably less predictable than in ermany where results of certain actions could be perceived to a degree, after experience with the rules had been gained.

There is one possible exception to this. Considering the speed at which battalions move in the terrible terrain (and remembering that this map scale is enlarged from the original), some question as to whether winter travel has been particularly well estimated (or whether the manoeuvrability of the units in *Germany* was under-estimated). However, this is a relatively minor quibble compared to the technical accuracy of the other game features.

Victory is based on different conditions for the different forces. Both players receive points each turn for the number of urban, town or airbase hexes they control at that time. In addition, the Soviets gain four points for every NATO unit they eliminate whilst the NATO player only receives one point per destroyed Soviet unit. This necessitates the NATO player making the most of the stealth of his forces compared to that of his adversaries. Because of the importance of airstrikes, it kills two birds with one stone if the NATO player directs most of his energy into controlling Soviet airbases. The game ends randomly between turns 14, 15 or 16. Whichever side you play, the pace will be hot from start to finish.

Presentation 91%
Not up to the standard set by the first game in the series but very good nonetheless.

Graphics 87%
The usual quality of SSI is present here.

Instructions 88%
It would have been easy for SSI to have included the full set of rules and thereby make this game playable by itself. This is my main criticism.

Authenticity 79%
Given the time-scale involved, the scenario didn't quite convince me.

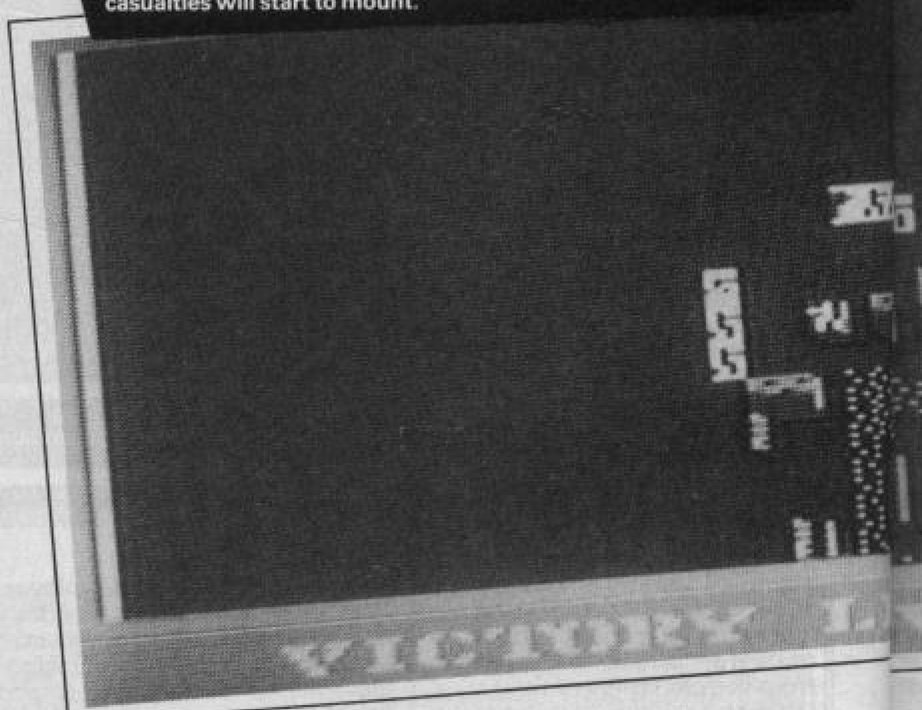
Playability 92%
All of this fails to impair gameplay which is still challenging and exciting.

Overall 85%
Mixed feelings prevent me from rating this higher. It really is a very good game, but I fail to see why you need to by another game first. This attitude is not good for wargaming.

FIELD OF FIRE

US Gold/SSI disk only, keys and joystick with keys

It's important to get your men to cover as soon as possible or casualties will start to mount.

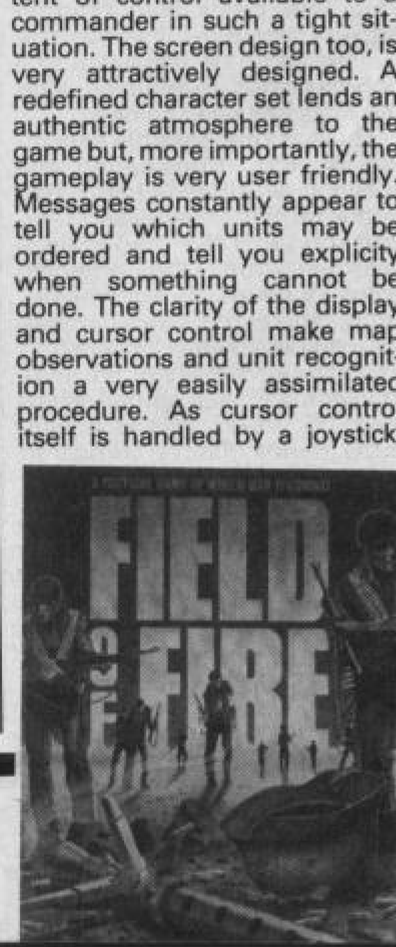


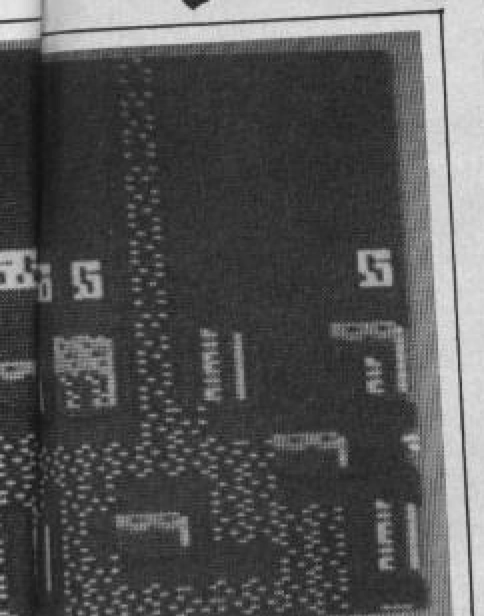
This is a markedly different offering from the other SSI wargames reviewed of late. Rather than being a large scale strategy game, it relies heavily on a tactical approach, being a series of scenarios based on the activities of Easy Company of the First Infantry Division in WW II. You take the role of company commander and issue orders to six man fire teams in any of eight small scale engagements. Apart from the eight scenarios being individually playable, they may be combined chronologically to become a campaign game.

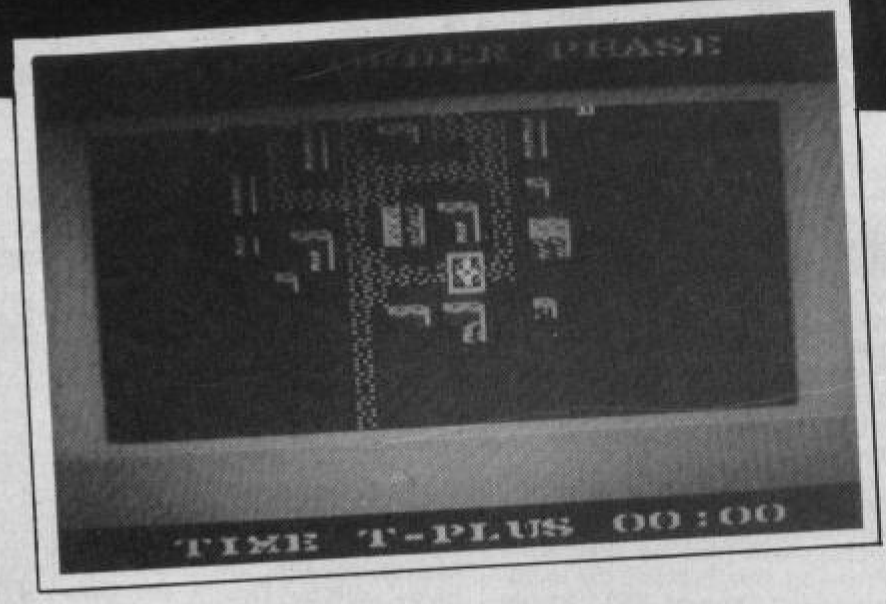
The rules book is one of the best I've ever encountered. Apart from the mechanics of the game being explained in crisp and coherent detail, profiles of the various fire team leaders are given to enable you to judge their likely performance in combat, a clever and interesting feature. Also, historical notes are provided with 'Night of St Anne', an account of a post Normandy engagement by a company commander. It highlights excellently the kind of difficulties troops encounter in close quarter combat. Designer's notes are also included along with suggested strategies for each of the scenarios involved.

One of the first things to strike you about this game is the detail and flexibility. Units have weapons ranging from knives to mortars (each side having their own specific weaponry). Units are displayed to show whether they are a mortar crew, machine gun crew or whatever and the differing effects of the weapons used are accurately taken into account. Tanks and anti-tank weaponry are also dealt with. American forces may use forward observers and engineers but these have limited use depending on the scenario.

The order phases are designed in such a way that the player may take advantage of a lucky break almost immediately, adding pace and realism to the extent of control available to a commander in such a tight situation. The screen design too, is very attractively designed. A redefined character set lends an authentic atmosphere to the game but, more importantly, the gameplay is very user friendly. Messages constantly appear to tell you which units may be ordered and tell you explicity when something cannot be done. The clarity of the display and cursor control make map observations and unit recognition a very easily assimilated procedure. As cursor control itself is handled by a joystick,







even the total novice can get to grips with the game before becoming bored or frustrated with overly complex turn processing.

Because the campaign game defaults to the second level of complexity (and because I only have a limited time to prepare these reviews), I only played three of the scenarios, all of which were played at the beginner's level. At first, I thought victory was easily in my grasp but the computer plays the Axis forces well and I found my most powerful units being cut to shreds before they had been put to really good use. Retiring to read the designer's notes and strategy hints (which I should have done in the first place), I tentatively prepared for the next game. Moving to the second scenario, *Forever Road*, and taking note of the advice from the book, I managed to gain victory at a cost. In the third scenario, I was well and truely hammered but this seemed to be because of a bad distribution of forces.

SSI have a great game with *Field of Fire*. It serves as an excellent game for beginners and experts alike. The presentation is reminiscent of *City Fight*, the old conventional wargame from the sadly defuncked Simulations Publications Inc. The flexibility, realism and complexity of the scenarios will provide the player with many months of rewarding gaming.

Presentation 92%
Exquisite.

Graphics 92%
Very atmospheric.

Instructions 97%
Of the highest order.

Authenticity 94%
Very accurate play.

Playability 97%
The demanding scenarios provide rewarding games.

Overall 96%
Simply superb . . .

STRATEGY

MASTER OF MAGIC

Mastertronic, £2.99 cass, joystick or keys



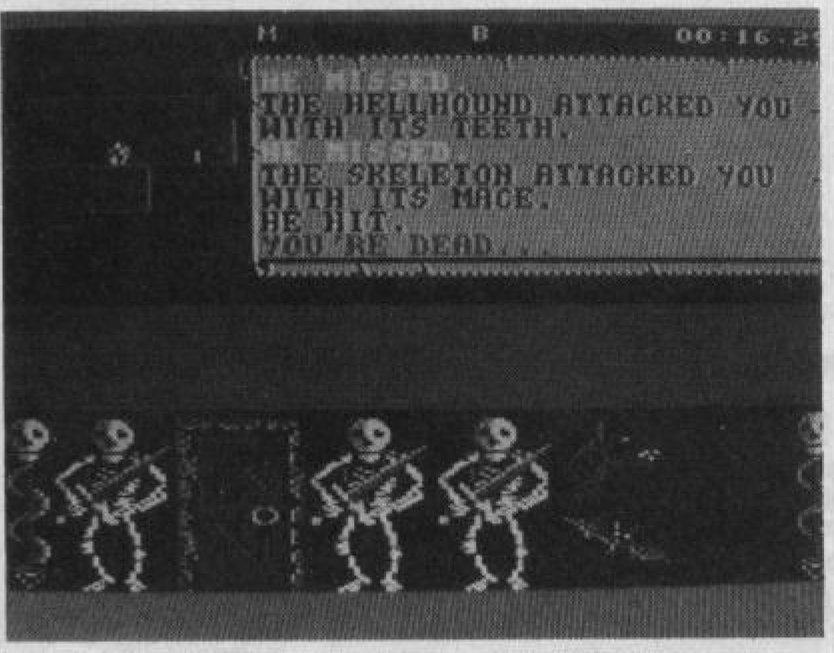
Whilst exploring underground caverns you chance upon a deep black pool. A ripple in the mirror smooth surface draws you closer to the edge. A powerful hand slides out and quickly grabs you under! It is the hand of Thelric, Master of Magic, plunging you into his strange mythical world of Magic and Mystery.

'It is written in the Book of Magic that only Thelric has the knowledge which blends time and space into a powerful spell. He will not cast this spell to return you to your own world until you have retrieved for him the lost Amulet of Immortality. Without it he will age and die.'

So reads the intro to Mastertronics latest game. It's actually rather difficult to categorise. The whole thing is normally controlled via the joystick with the need for rapid player response like an arcade game. The actual plot is typical adventure material but the way in which the character must act in order to survive and be successful has over-riding elements of strategy. In other words, everybody in the office said, 'You do it!' Who am I to argue?

In fact, this is the most remarkable game I've ever seen for the price. Those who have heard about PSS's MIDAS system will be familiar with the way the game works. In the top left corner of the screen is a constantly changing plan of the player's current location showing other creatures present as well as a small blob revealing your exact position. The player is only shown what his or her character is able to see. On the right hand side of the screen is the information window which basically contains a text version of what is going on. In the middle part of the screen is a kind of 'action window.' On pressing the joystick button, a series of commands appear in this window. Toggling the joystick allows a particular word to be highlighted and a further button press accepts that command.

As an example, a small bat might appear in the room. In the information window, this information will also be displayed. Pressing the button, the command list appears and I toggle the joystick until CAST is highlighted and press again. The command window updates showing all the spells I could possibly cast. Selecting MAGIC MISSILE I press the button again and the text display might answer, 'The bat is dead.'



One interesting feature I haven't mentioned so far is that when certain phenomena appear (I say phenomena because they can be anything from stairs to orcs), a picture appears in the window at the base of the screen. These are colourful and well drawn. If one of them is a creature killed by you, the word DEAD written in blood curdling red is 'stamped' on it. A very nice touch.

So using this method of interaction the player is free to roam a large (and necessarily mappable) dungeon inhabited with various forms of undead and other nasty creatures in the quest. The only quibble I have about the way this system works is the responsiveness of the character is sometimes too fiddly for my liking. It's possible to get most inconveniently stuck in a doorway when trying to run away because you have to be exactly in line with the out going passage. This proved fatal more than once.

The game is full of features you would not find in many games twice the price. After killing a monster it is possible to use any possessions it carried. Fighting depends on what weapon the character is holding in his right hand. Mind power necessary for magic is limited and must be used wisely. Monsters even have their own nasty habits. Finally the Rob Hubbard score for this game seems to suit it perfectly and adds a touch of real professionalism.

Master of Magic is a terrific game. It's well designed, fast and exciting. It plays well and demands a lot of skill from the player. The fact that it has been released at this price just shows what software houses can offer when they try. It doesn't appear to be quite as comprehensive as the MIDAS system but if that means it is only a cheap version of *Swords and Sorcery* then it's a very good cheap version.

Presentation 85%
Very well laid out indeed.

Graphics 83%
Animated graphics are crude but effective. Static graphics are excellent.

Instructions 70%
Concise but clear.

Authenticity 65%
It's a reasonable role playing game.

Playability 84%
Easily playable and quite addictive.

Value for money 98%
Should set an example to other software houses.

Overall 88%
Not as comprehensive as *Temple of Apshai* but still fun to play.

AND FINALLY . . .

When US Gold sent me the SSI batch, only tentative release dates for a few of the products had been settled. Unfortunately more information is difficult to come by. All the fantasy titles are planned for release in April and the first of the Superpowers series, *Germany 1985* is planned for May. Prices are as yet unkown with the exception of *Tigers in the Snow* which is retailing for £14.95 on disk and £9.95 on cassette. As to the possibility of any other titles appearing on cassette, US Gold were unable to comment at the time of writing. However, with the role playing games, this seems unlikely due to their large size.

Also, four of the games could not be reviewed for various reasons. *Battalion Commander* should have appeared in this issue but the disk somehow became corrupted and a spare copy was not available in time. *RDF 1985* arrived with the wrong rules book and again, no spare copies were available. Both *Tigers in the Snow* and *Knights of the Desert* were only available for the Atari and although they could have been previewed in this form, it was decided that Commodore incarnations would be preferable. When this information is available, I'll let you know all the details. Of course, any future SSI releases will be reviewed as soon as I get my paws on them. See you next month.



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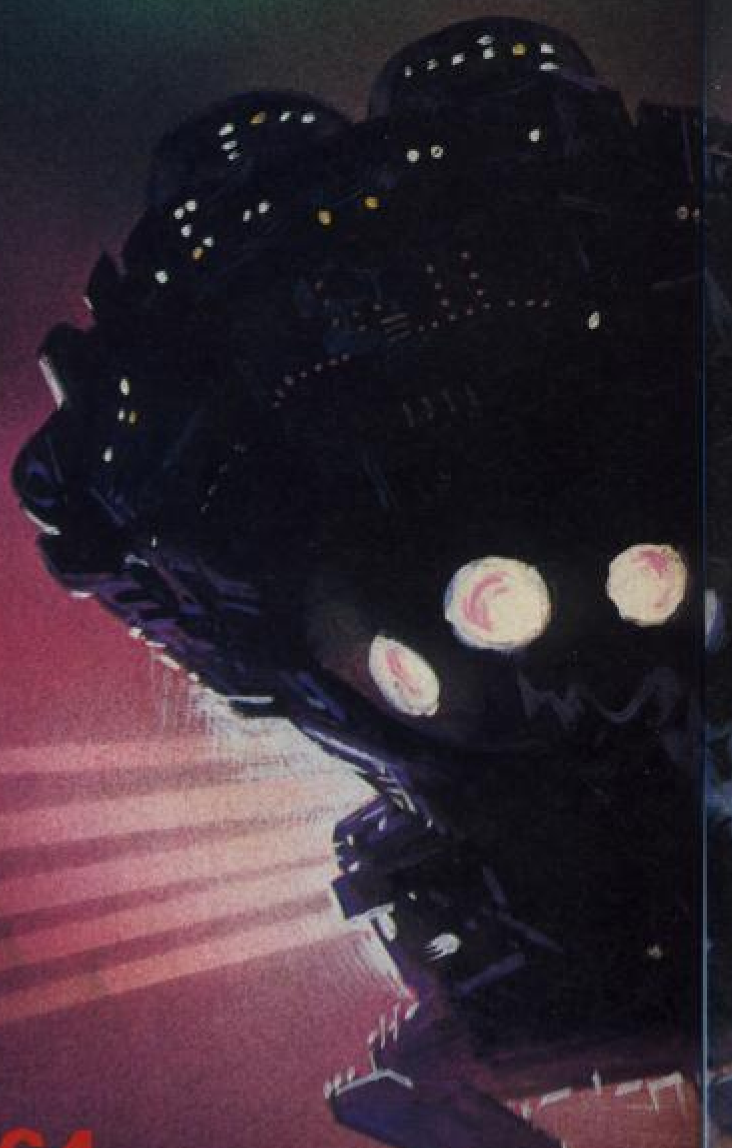


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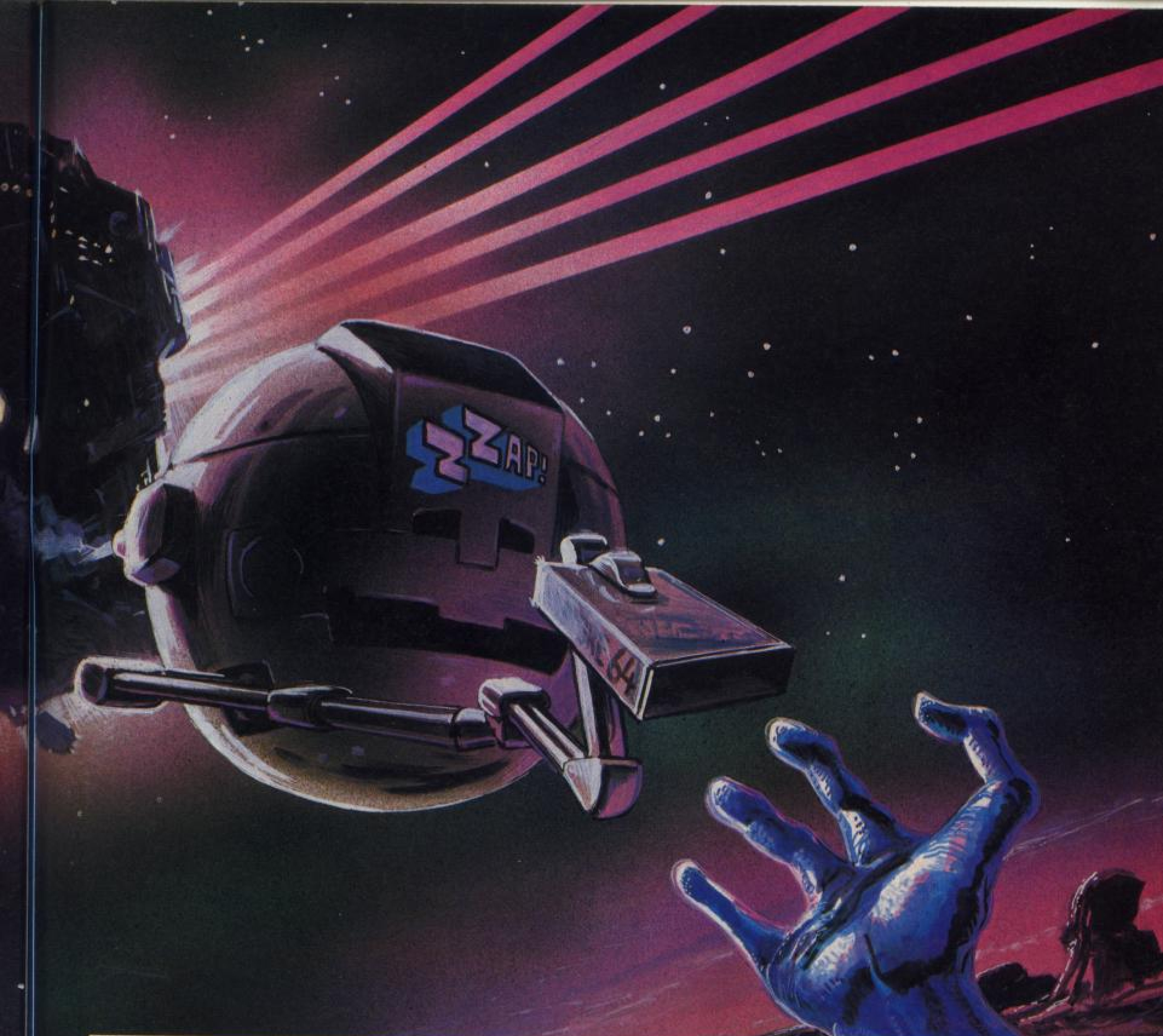
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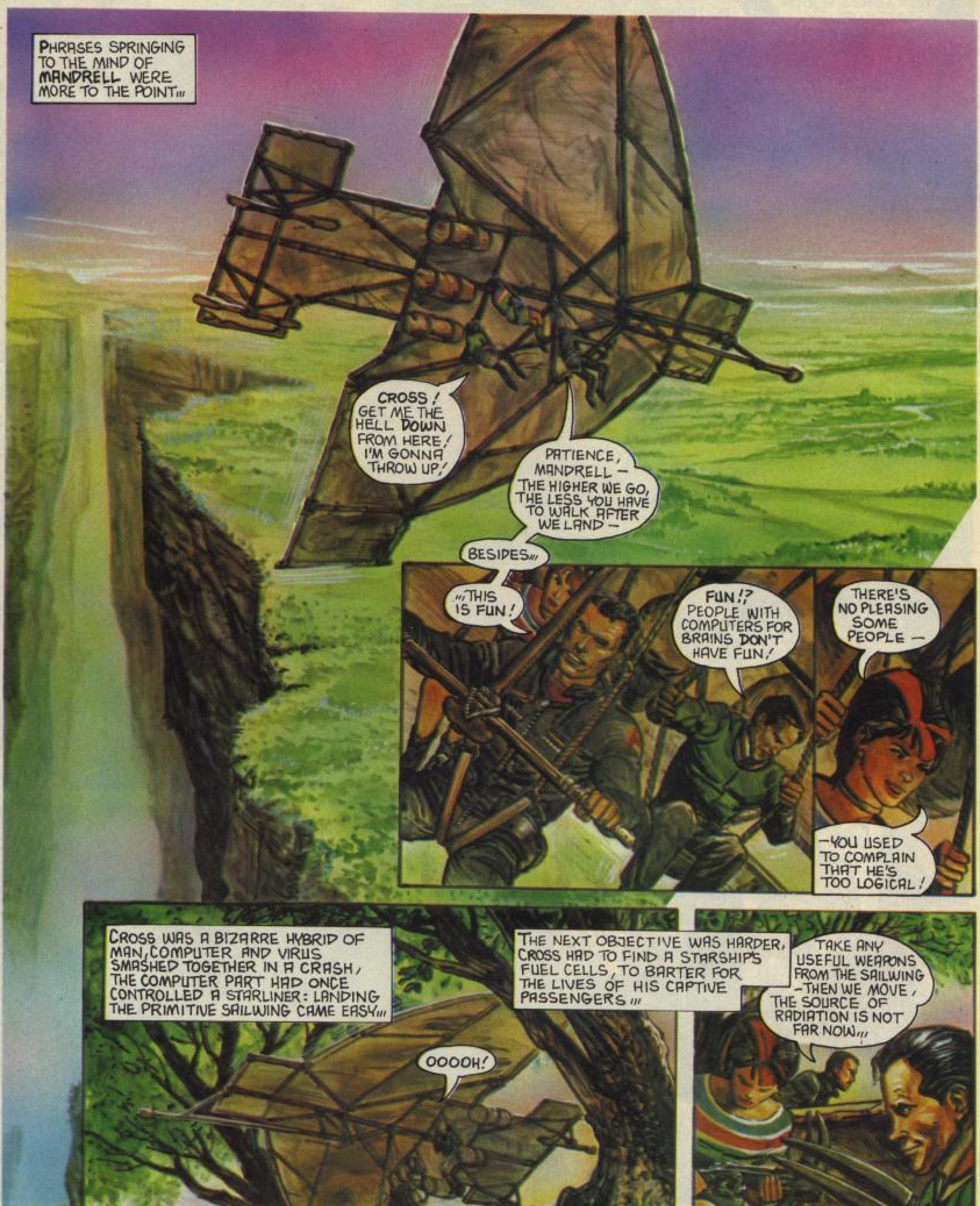
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Update:
Under normal circumstances, hang-gliding is fun. However, riding a violent thermal over an alien canyon 20K's deep can be less than enjoyable. 'Concentrates the mind wonderfully' is the phrase that springs to mind . . . .

THE TERMINAL MAN



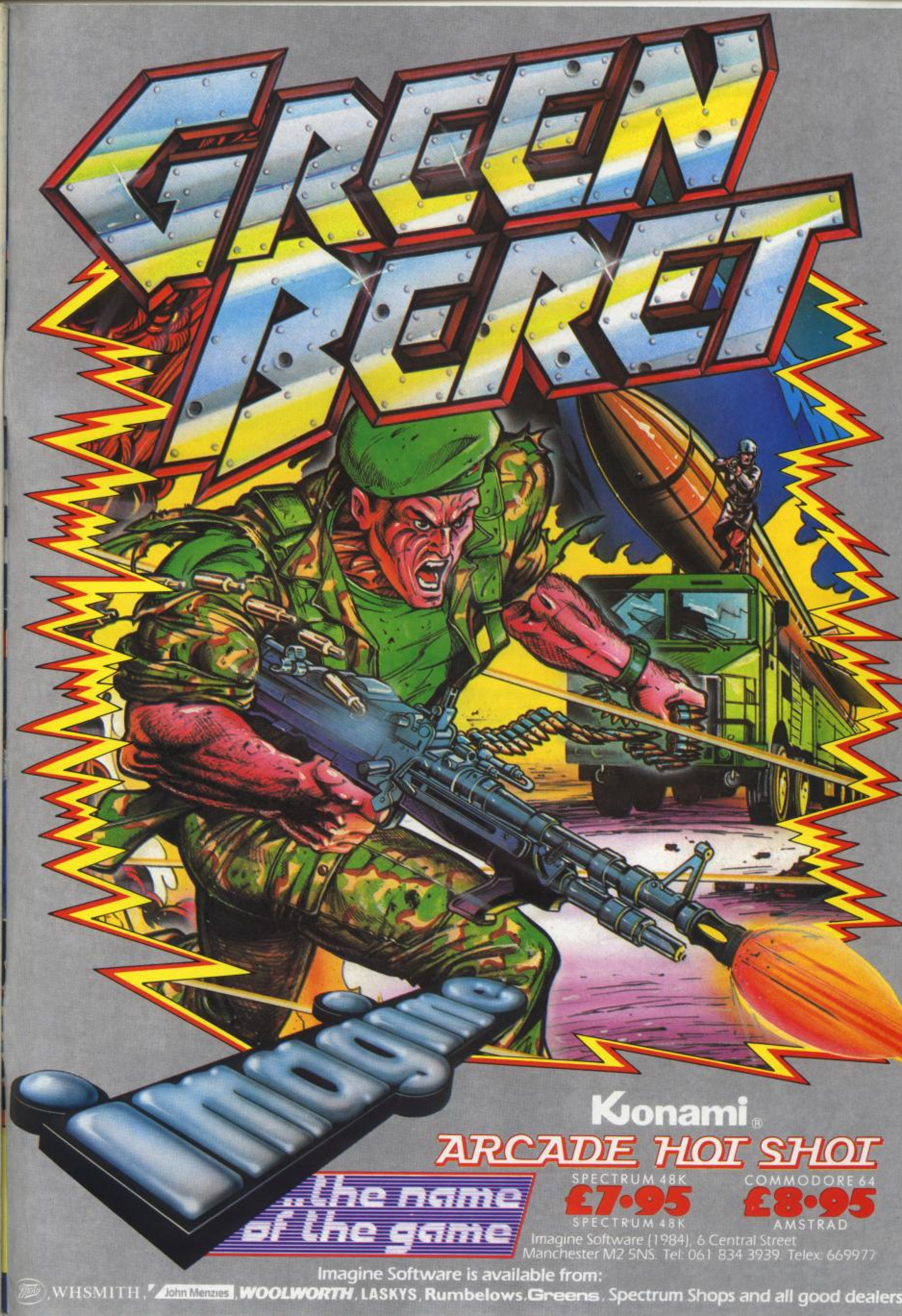


STORY BY KELVIN GOSNELL© DRAWN BY OLIVER FREY©


EDGE TOWARDS ME AND LINK HANDS — KEEP YOUR EYES COVERED OR I'LL BURN OUT YOUR OPTIC NERVES...
DON'T LET GO: KEEP MOVING, WE'RE GOING OUT THE WAY WE CAME IN!
MOVE!
HOW DID YOU WORK THAT? COME TO MENTION IT, WHAT DID YOU DO?
CALLED BIOLUMINESCENCE, THINGS LIKE EARTH JELLYFISH HAVE CELLS THAT RADIATE LIGHT TO LURE PREY—
THOSE CREATURES SAW IN THE INFRARED — SO I MUTATED MY VIRUS CELLS TO RADIATE ENOUGH INFRARED TO BLIND THEM—
WHY NOT KILL 'EM WHILE YOU COULD? THEY'RE STILL STOPPING US FROM GETTING ON...
DAMMIT, MANDRELL— I GOT YOU OUT OF THE HOLE DIDN'T I? I SIMPLY HAD NO SPARE ENERGY, NEEDED EVERY OUNCE TO POWER THE LIGHT...
BESIDES WHICH, THERE IS A LITTLE THING CALLED HUMANITY,
WE DON'T HAVE TO KILL EVERYTHING WHICH STANDS IN OUR WAY,
OH— SO IT'S BE-KIND-TO-MUTANTS WEEK, HUH? YOU TELL ME HOW WE GET THROUGH HERE THEN, LADY?
I GUIDE YOU,
?!



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*Screen as seen on Commodore 64

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